

# **LIBRARY SERVICE IN INDIA TODAY**

**A Symposium**

**Bengal Library Association**



*Bengal Library Association, English Series—2*

LIBRARY SERVICE IN INDIA TO DAY



# **Library Service In India To Day**

## **A Symposium**

**On the Library Development in Eastern India**

**Held on 27th & 28th February 1960**

**at Calcutta**

**Under the Joint auspices of**

**The Bengal Library Association**

**and**

**The United States Information Service**

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**THE BENGAL LIBRARY ASSOCIATION**

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## FOREWORD

Library movement of our country owes a great deal to the service of the Americans. Even to day we remember the contributions of Messers W A Borden and A D Dickinson with pleasure and gratitude. It is therefore in the fitness of things that the U S I S should take active interest in the development of Library service in our country. The symposium organised jointly by the U S I S and the Bengal Library Association is the first critical study of the progress made towards development of library service in this part of our country. I believe the Report will be interesting and instructive to all library workers. I feel happy to place this book to the reading public.

Sailakumar Mukherjee  
President

Bengal Library Association

May 15 1963

## PREFACE

Library movement in West Bengal has taken long strides since the achievement of independence. The private libraries, which so long received hindrance rather than help from the Government, were given aid both in the form of money and book-loans, District and Rural Libraries were established, new experiments in integrated library service were undertaken in selected areas, book-mobiles were provided, arrangements were made to train up people to produce books for neo-literates, and a new inspiration has been observed in founding Children's Libraries.

It was, therefore, necessary to study the progress in all its aspects. Besides we have to know the development of other states also, so that we could have a comparative view of the situation and learn from their experience. As a watch-dog of the library movement it is a duty of the Association to help to appraise the position correctly. Bengal Library Association was very happy to take the opportunity of organising a symposium on the progress of Library Development in Eastern India jointly with the U S I S, Calcutta. My predecessor-in-office, Sri Phambhusan Ray, the then Secretary and the then Executive Committee of the Association are to be congratulated on their momentous decision. Library workers of all the four states of Eastern India, particularly those of West Bengal, will also remain grateful to the authorities and workers of the U S I S for their guidance and assistance in the matter.

The staff of the U S I S worked as one man on the occasion to make it a success. It is they, who prepared the draft of the manuscript of the report from the tape records of discussions. It would not have been possible without their financial assistance to bring out this report. Our sincere feeling of gratitude to them beggars description.

Special mention has to be made of the services of Miss Ruth Krueger, the then Director of Library Service of the U S I S. The sisterly affection with which she looked after the comforts of the delegates and participants will long be cherished in our memory with pleasure and gratitude. How we



wish, this report would come out when she continued in her office in Calcutta

We are grateful to Dr Nihar Ranjan Ray for presiding over the symposium, to Dr D M Sen, for inaugurating it and to Mr B. S Kesavan and Miss K Diehl, for acting as moderators. We are thankful also to the authorities of the Rama-krishna Mission Institute of Culture and the National Library for providing us with the space for holding the symposium. Our thanks are also due to the delegates and participants, from this and adjoining states

It is a great pleasure to put on record our indebtedness to our indefatigable ex-president Sri Tincori Dutta, who finalised the programme of publishing this report. We are thankful to Sri Prabir Raychaudhuri, who has taken all the trouble to do everything necessary in connection with the publication, from its editing to its seeing through the press. Our thanks are due to Sri Sukumar Chaudhuri of the Bengal Library Association for his untiring service

We sincerely believe that this study, the first of its kind in our country, will be very helpful in further development of libraries in our state. We apologise to the public for this belated endeavour, and crave their indulgence in giving it its due importance

Bejavanath Mukherjee  
Secretary  
Bengal Library Association

- 1 Subject Symposium on the Library Development in Eastern India
  - (a) Public Library & its relation to the community
  - (b) Bookmobile Service
  - (c) Library Service in Schools
  - (d) Children Library
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and  
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- 5 President Dr Nihar Ranjan Ray M P  
President, Indian Library Association
- 6 Inauguration Dr D M Sen Secy Education Dept., West Bengal
- 7 Moderators (1) Shri B S Kesavan  
(2) Miss K. Ditchi
- 8 Delegates Attended 200
- 9 States Represented West Bengal Bihar Assam, Orissa
- 10 Category of Participants Library workers Social workers, Educationists Govt. officials

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## CHAPTER I

### PURPOSE & SCOPE OF THE SYMPOSIUM

DR. NIMAR RANJAN ROY (President, Indian Library Association)

The United States Information Service took the initiative in suggesting to the Bengal Library Association that they jointly sponsor a seminar for the discussion of certain problems in connection with librarianship in the eastern region of India. I as one associated with the Association from its very inception suggested that we should all welcome a symposium given to the discussion of libraries and librarianship, especially in connection with library work in rural areas. I also suggested to the Bengal Library Association that they should have the symposium as early as possible.

The Government of West Bengal, under the Directorate of Education, has undertaken a very wide programme of libraries in the rural areas. For much too long, we have concentrated our efforts mostly in the cities and the Bengal Library Association for the last twenty years and more have been crying more or less in the wilderness to extend library service to rural communities. The second five-year plan gave us an opportunity. Library Associations all over India have been clamouring for recognition not only for the profession of librarianship but of the need of libraries as a means of social education.

Social education is very important today and this need was recognized for the first time in the second five-year plan, under which the State Governments also took up very extended programmes. With the knowledge I have about the various other states of India I say that we in West Bengal have reasons to congratulate ourselves. What the Government of West Bengal has done and has been doing is much greater, at least in magnitude than what most of other states have been able to do. Today these rural libraries have thrown before us certain problems with which we were never acquainted before. Even in the technical matter of librarianship there are certain questions that have to be tackled anew, since the textbooks on the

subject do not have ready made answers. The social backgrounds and the contexts are different, and we must find the answers ourselves. It is because of this that a symposium of this kind, where librarians can pose these questions in a precise manner, is so helpful. Textbook problems and solutions are very well known. We want to know definite problems that libraries and librarians are confronted with in the rural areas, and semi rural semi urban areas, in the factory areas. And these questions should be precisely set forth and precise answers sought. I am glad that the United States Information Service and the Bengal Library Association have asked Dr D M Sen, Director of Public Instruction, who combines in himself also the secretaryship of the Ministry of Education of this State to inaugurate the Symposium.

Mr Bartlett on behalf of the USIS will welcome you all and he will be followed by Mr Subodh Mukherjee President of the Bengal Library Association. So far as the academic side of the training of librarianship is concerned he knows the problems and I am sure he will place them before you. He will also welcome you here on behalf of the Bengal Library Association.

MR ARTHUR BARTLETT (Director of U S I S, Calcutta)

It is a great pleasure and privilege for me to welcome you here for this symposium on behalf of the USIS. I like to think that it is a good sign and an auspicious omen for our usefulness in the future here that I am being permitted straightaway to participate even so slightly as this in such an effort to share ideas and knowledge about ways and means of stimulating the usefulness of libraries and widening readership of books. For, if there is one predominant purpose of the USIS, as I see, it is to stimulate and increase mutual understanding of peoples. Perhaps more narrowly here in India to increase the understanding between your people and our people. For we have no doubt that given enough understanding of each other, our relationship as nations cannot help but be good. And surely there is no way better to increase understanding than to increase knowledge, the sort of true objective knowledge that one attains by a wide and free readership of books. So, very briefly I just wish to salute you for the work you are doing towards that end and hope that this symposium

will be very successful as one more means helping you accomplish that

**SHRI SUBODH MUKHERJEE** (President, Bengal Library Association)

I have great pleasure in welcoming all of you to this library symposium, a joint endeavour made possible by co-operation between the USIS and our Association. The Bengal Library Association has, ever since its inception in 1925, been working almost single-handed in championing the cause of libraries throughout the State. Besides meeting in conferences at different district centres, the Association has been helping the nascent public libraries in the country with free technical advice. The most important work that the Association has been doing very systematically is the training of library personnel for the last twenty years and more. Besides the annual summer course we run a week-end course lasting about seven months, and also training camps as and when possible within our very limited means at the different districts. The training of librarians at different levels has been the largest in this state because the demand for it has also enormously increased. Besides the Association's certificate course for undergraduates, the camps are organized for the district and rural library centres. A higher training course for graduates is run by the University of Calcutta since 1946, and there is a demand also for postgraduate degree course which we hope will be soon introduced by the University. Some short term refresher courses have been recently started by some of the district library associations for their urban and suburban libraries. There is also a move for the training of rural librarians by the state under their social education department which is in overall charge of library services in the state. All the different existing and proposed courses need proper co-ordination and we hope that the State Government, under the matured guidance of Dr. Sen, will give the matter necessary consideration.

This joint symposium is important in many respects. The different topics that will be taken up, viz., public library and its relationship to the community, bookmobile services, school libraries and children's libraries, are all the most worthy questions, specially in the present day perspective of development of book service at all levels. Free book service for all has ever

been the dream of the Association, and on it depends the all round development of community life for better mutual understanding amongst all. The policy for development of libraries both at the centre and in the states is moving towards that goal and we hope that this symposium will also contribute substantially towards the same by showing how book services at different levels may be effectively organized and worked in our country.

I will now mention how grateful our Association is to the staff members of the USIS and Miss Krueger particularly, for the interest and sympathy in the work of the Association. I welcome you all once again individually and collectively.

DR D. M. SRA (Secretary, Education Department, West Bengal).

As a partner in the enterprise of promoting library services in rural areas I should like to tell you one or two points, which we have in mind as we see the problems ahead of us and most probably those points may in a way bring your discussion nearer to mother earth and keep them away from the very legitimate scope of theoretical discussion which has no bounds. And in this regard I am talking particularly of the development of library services in connection with the second/third five year plan in this country. Very often you get more benefit indirectly. And library services is one of the welfare services which, in the second five year plan—I know as far as this state is concerned—has gained more indirectly than directly because when we wanted a little more money from the Planning Commission, well immediately there were much high priorities that we look very small and we had to be content with a very small provision. And whatever Professor Roy might have told you that we have done better than other states if taken at its face value, does not mean much. Whatever provisions we had were used up in the first three years and there was nothing left for the next two years. And our enthusiastic colleagues on the library side sometimes rightly or wrongly stole resources from other provision heads in order to get things going. Well, I congratulate them. Keep your efforts. You have all my sympathy and as long as the Auditor General is not laid on you, I have no objection.

There are one or two points that I wanted to tell you



about the expansion of library services in the rural areas. You find that there is a tremendous amount of public voluntary co-operation, and people just don't merely pass resolutions and leave the entire burden of public effort on Writers' Building. They do work, and in doing the work, however little it may be, the little surplus energy that they have is put to service. And by doing it, they rightly attract the public help that they deserve. And that is a very thoughtful sign for any planner if you are planning far ahead that at the end, near the ground, among the ordinary people there is a very great desire to read books, to read good books, to take care of books, to make the most use of good books and also to be proud of books. This is really important. And when you are thinking ahead, this factor will certainly be a source of great encouragement to you because you can take a more or less basic interest for granted in your planning.

The second point that you have to take into consideration is that in an under-developed country where even the children have to contribute to the domestic budget a little service means so much. In developing a service which is comprehensive enough to capture everybody you must be sure that you are not obstructing or disturbing the rural family economy. For example, we fix school hours say, from ten to five because this is the time convenient for us, and for the teachers. Often we find that the school services we set up run directly antagonistic to the cycle of rural life, upsetting and thereby sometimes putting a tremendous handicap on some of the people who are really interested in attending schools or in sending their children to the schools. So I propose that instead of children and adults coming to your libraries, you may have to go to them. The existing position may have to be reversed. You will have to make your arrangements so elastic and at the same time so comprehensive that you may be able to cover all the people who are keen for your services. I leave the details to you.

A service that cannot go ahead without you and on which the Government of India is laying stress is the advancement of women's education. And here I know from the little experience we have that if you want to make education comprehensive among women, the library and its services will have to

be given as much importance and as much emphasis and as much stimulus as our schools. Many of you may remember the famous saying of Tagore that in a school you graze in a limited manner as the cattle graze, tied to a pole, but in a library you graze freely. And when you have unlimited freedom in a library service you can really penetrate every nook and corner of family life, and see that light enters there.

We as librarians have a much better chance than the stereotyped schools of the day. Perhaps the school service and the library service will have to close their ranks. All specialists are so engaged in their own lines that they run parallel and often meet in infinity, not in the finite world. I hope this won't happen to our schools and libraries because that will be a disaster and great loss to a poor country like ours.

Another point I wish to stress is universal free compulsory primary education. Here again, from the little bit of field work that we have done in the first five years, we have found that schools without a library service was a lame service. We just could not really let the school go far enough. Wherever we have put a library, wherever a resident teacher has taken a little interest in the library, not only the school children, but their guardians and parents as well come, and without running any adult education class or a night class, we could really make our schools or library the real living centre of the community, humming with activity, may be not all day, but at all leisure hours, whenever housewives, adults, children are free. Many of you may have experience of how when someone reads a book, how other illiterate people who cannot read but only understand, look at him with an expression of aspiration which plainly says, I wish I could read. Whosoever the planners are, when we are thinking of universal free primary education in the third plan period, they will have to work with you, otherwise the gap will inevitably remain.

I am only thinking about and looking forward to the next five years. But for you the whole future is open and you may discuss it.

## CHAPTER II

### THE PUBLIC LIBRARY & ITS RELATION TO THE COMMUNITY

**MODERATOR** SHRI B S KESAVAN (Librarian, National Library)

The theme set for discussion this afternoon is *the public library and its relation to the community*

It is very simple really, the modern concept of a public library in relation to the community. The days have gone when the notion of a library was several shelves full of books passively waiting for a casual enquirer or the research scholar to come in and consult it as and when he wants it, and the books will patiently wait on until the other fellow turned up. This passive concept has given place to a more dynamic notion today. You find that education in this world does not stop merely with the schools and the colleges. This is really formal education and if you really take the census of people in the world who can possibly benefit by formal education, you will find that the proportion is very low. But remember that where people leave off at school or college, it is not as if their education has been completed at all. It is quite a trite saying which all of you are familiar with that everyday of your life you are learning things and all through your life you are preparing yourself to know more and more. As somebody said, the tragedy of life is that when we are fairly old and we feel that we know how to spell things out, then the time comes for you to spell yourself out of the world. And there isn't much scope or opportunity for you to use this experience which you have gained by stumbling and by trying all through these several years. Now why do I say all this? Because the experience of many countries has shown that the library as it is constituted today in Europe, England, America, Russia and a few other places, is the institution which is responsible for the enlightenment of the people in general. All of you have known of this cliché "the man in the street". Now if any institution really caters for the man in the street, it is the library. And one of the delightful things about the

library is the capacity to get a man to know without any of the terrifying aspects of formal compulsion. In other words, the library today is an institution which beckons everybody to come into it and leaves everybody to himself or herself within its precincts, completely relaxed and at the same time able to find out for himself what he wants to know. Now this method of educating the people is the primary responsibility of libraries and today the library is not an institution meant only for the grown up, or only the learned or the scholarly, but it is meant for the entire family, from the little ones right on to the people of whatever stage of life they are in. The library is something that caters to the entire family. They are all welcome to it and you find that the way is constituted is such that the people like to come there and avail of its services.

You know very well that the use of books is not merely for study but to let us live more fully, joyously, happily. The instructional aspect of books is but a narrow aspect. There are several other aspects too. To know how to live, how to be happy, how to live your life in all its fullness. Now books are meant for all these purposes and the libraries are meant to tell people how to live their lives in all its fullness, in all its joyousness. Now that I think is the dynamic new concept of the public library which is accepted by most educationalists. And today, in India, you know very well that with all our tradition of learning, with our great cultural traditions there is a very ironic situation where you find that the library as this dynamic unit is not be seen as often as it should be. Everyone of you know that one of the most remarkable experiments made in this direction was in Delhi under the sponsorship of UNFSCO. The Government of India joined with UNESCO and they started the Delhi Public Library. And everyone who has gone to this Public Library will tell you how richly it is used. The tragic part of it is not that they want readers, but that they want books. One of the most happy things about the Delhi Public Library is that the books on the shelf present a most woebegone, bedraggled shabby, dog-eared appearance, which tells you that each one of these books has been read many times. And the public have soiled these books by use and you do not find

a natty little neat happy little glass cased almirah housing beautiful books to be shown to visitors as and when they appear on the scene. This is a library which is using books and books are treated, very highly, as a perishable commodity. Not that they are worshipped, but that they are used. Now in this remarkable experiment in Delhi, the life of the city flows through this library, literally flows through it. It is also situated just opposite to the main railway station in Delhi. It was supposed to be an old canteen meant for the military in the old days that has been converted into the library which is literally standing at the crossroads of public movement and you will find that a triumphant justification has been made there for the building up of similar public libraries all over the country.

For some reason or other which we cannot clarify to ourselves, there has been a cussedness in the situation, that this remarkable experiment, with all its inspiration and with all its lessons has remained unimitated. You take this great city of Calcutta with its remarkable population, its intellectual traditions, its remarkable curiosity, reading habits, you also take the fact that there is the great province where book publishing has achieved some dimensions both in quality and in quantity, this great city does not have a public library. You know the definition of a public library. A place where every man, woman and child can as a matter of right get whatever he or she wants to read at any time they want to read it, free of cost, which is a very important thing. A free service available to everyone at every stage of life as a matter of birthright that is a library. It is one of the basic freedoms that a man should have the freedom to read the opportunity to read. We do not know what prevents people from positing such a library here. Of course, in Calcutta it would be absurd to say that you can have one library because you know you are going to have atleast a chain of public libraries in Calcutta, and whether it is the responsibility of the government or the Corporation is not the question. Whosoever has to take the responsibility, there it is, the picture is quite clear for you. You have got in this remarkable city an opportunity waiting to be grasped. And what is more, you have got what you haven't got in any other city. A public which will clear up the book shelves within

half an hour the library is open. Let me tell you that. Let there be a lending library in any part of this great city and the librarian will be very happy. He will find his shelves happily empty within about an hour and a half after he opens the doors. That is the situation in this great city and you will find that we have not got it. My job here is not to complain or awake resentment, but to draw your attention to the actual picture. We talk about public relations, the library in its relations to the community, but first of all you must have something to have relations. At the present moment it is "non est", there is no public library.

You take me for example in the National Library. I am falling between two stools. If ever there is a library where the largest amount of frustration is to be experienced for borrowing books, you can come to the National Library. You will find there are a hundred reasons why I don't issue a book. If you apply for thirty books, you will stand a chance of getting two, and that is if you are lucky, and if you have waited there for quite a long period, enough to break anybody's heart. But look at the tragic situation. With all these frustrations with all these provocations, which is not my making it is a part of the situation, you find that the lending library members are mounting up, shooting up every month, deposits are flowing in. And why is it that this happens with all horrible frustrations that one can experience? Because you have got one institution which either ought to be a National Library and be a center of reference institution, or be a public library and lend books in a sensible fashion. But here, trying to be both—you see that expression falling between two stools, a delightful expression to exemplify the situation that we are in.

Now fortunately, the Government of West Bengal has assumed the leadership in the development of libraries which is very enviable. I have been a member of the Library Advisory Committee which toured all around the country, even to the much talked of places where library legislation has been enacted and we are supposed to see delightful states of affairs prevailing. Well, let me tell you. I was glad that I came home to Bengal and I found that with all our limitations and with all our difficulties, we have done a few things over here in the positing of the district libraries, in having a certain

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number of urban centres. In other words, atleast today in Bengal you have the opportunity to make mistakes, you have atleast the scope to go wrong, and please remember what mankind requires is the scope and the opportunity to make mistakes and go wrong, not to do anything wonderful, not to achieve anything perfect, but to stumble, to fall, to learn, to try and pick yourself up and to do something. And you will find that that sort of thing is available over here today.

There is only one appeal I have to make to the speakers at this symposium. Please do not be hide-bound by the title of the theme. The library in its relations to the community is a sort of portmanteau theme which will enable everyone of you to say something and still be relevant. Everyone of you is welcome to participate in this discussion.

SHRI NIKHIL RANJAN ROY (Chief Inspector, Social (Adult) Education, Government of West Bengal)

Trying to speak on the public library and its relation to the community, I would like to take myself away from here for the moment to a place that I visited sometime ago. It has practically no meaning for those who have not visited it, but I think I should mention it in particular because I hope someone here might visit that place and see what actually the situation is there.

Tamluk is a sub-divisional town in the district of Midnapore, and ten miles from there is a place called Sutahata. It is on the Ganges and is a police station area, a "Thana", as we call it. The thana is roughly a radius of ten to fifteen miles and in this area libraries have grown rather spontaneously. The Government support came much later. Within that area has grown up a number of libraries. The number will be about fifty to sixty, six of them sponsored by the Government. These are what we call sponsored rural libraries. Down at the sub-divisional headquarters at Tamluk, there is a district library, within reach of which there are six government sponsored libraries which have branches all over. The six government sponsored rural libraries have the responsibility of developing the area intensively in library services. While visiting all these libraries, some of the concrete specific problems that came to my notice are the want of books. This is true not only of one public library in

the capital of India, but also with regard to the small village libraries which we visited in that area. Almost all the libraries have shelves empty of books, and there is hardly more resources at our disposal to replace the books as soon as they are taken away. There was a sort of a rural symposium in that area, which I had the privilege of attending and this problem was posed before us. How to increase the number of books, how to get more books, our resources being limited? The government can only pay up to a certain extent.

Now here comes the question of the relation between the library and the community. The community is not so willing to open its purse—strings for the libraries now for reasons which are obvious. So how to do it? During the course of discussion a solution was suggested. Why not let these six rural libraries federate among themselves into a library union and specialize in stocking books of a particular kind in particular libraries instead of stocking all sorts of books in all the libraries? That practical solution was grasped and a start has been made in this direction. One or two libraries have taken upon themselves the task of collecting only books on literature, books on fiction, books on poetry, or books on the humanities. That will give the most scope to add to their stock with the limited resources that they have.

SRI B. S. KISAVAN. Our problem is paucity of books. In other words Bengal, say, publishes a certain number of books every year. Now these are the only items available, whether your library specialized one of them in fiction and the other in other subjects and then pooled them together. How is this particular technique going to solve the problem of book production? The number of items are the same. Is your suggestion that each of these libraries having limited finance cannot go in for all these books and, therefore, if there is a central book pool they can draw from them? But the basic problem today not only in Bengal but all parts of this country is that our book production runs to several thousand titles. Now these several thousand titles, compared to the demand that there is in the country, gets itself exhausted very soon and we are at our wits end to know what to do to provide fresh reading for the people. Now how is this union business going to solve this problem?



**SHRI NIKHIL RANJAN ROY** Well, I am not trying to get at the problem of book production now. What I am trying to drive at is that if the total pool can be richer than what is now possible and if by intra-library lending services a particular library can get hold of books from other neighbouring libraries, a reader who comes to one library and has to go away disappointed without getting what he wants does not have to be so disappointed. To some extent the demand for books by readers of the particular community can be met. But so far as the question of book production is concerned, that is another problem which might be thought over also.

The second problem is that of accommodation. When the government only pays a part of the building construction the money that is available from the tax fund is limited. But it is a satisfying experience that whenever government money has been given, local people in spite of their unwillingness otherwise to pay for library books, have come forward raised contributions from amongst themselves, which have matched the government grants and made the building possible.

Suppose a village library building costs say, eight thousand rupees. Two rooms, a running verandah, some stock space, reading room space and some sanitary arrangements. Government pays four thousand rupees and the remainder comes from public contribution. It is a satisfying experience that this four thousand rupees comes from the small contributor who contributes five, ten or fifteen rupees or even less. If you mix with the people if you talk to them, we know that there is a genuine demand for libraries for the improvement of the existing libraries. But when the question of setting up a new building comes in, the question of money stands as a bar. That is the problem and of course it cannot be solved outright from the speaker's table here. But it has been found at least in many places in West Bengal, that there has been very encouraging response from the public sector. And if you win the confidence of the public by properly approaching them there is no dearth of money so far as the construction of buildings for libraries is concerned.

In the third plan, of course, more liberal provisions for construction of buildings are going to be made and if that comes about, this problem of providing more accommodation

for libraries, reading rooms and other amenities will be solved to a certain extent

Another problem is the linking up of school services with library services. In the Tamluk area this is being done with a certain amount of creditable efficiency. The bookmobile van which has been placed at the disposal of the Tamluk District Library, instead of supplying books to the book deposit centers as its only work, is really functioning as a mobile library. How? Along with books, they also carry portable folding furniture. And on the wayside wherever the book can go, they select some primary schools, junior basic schools—and the junior basic schools today are much better from the point of view of building and amenities than our traditional primary schools. They have pucca buildings and also in many places there are shady trees. The van selects a shady tree in the school compound. They spread out the furniture and the books. It has been our experience that whenever this is done, the children try to come out of their classes even throwing discipline to the four winds. But that is not to be encouraged, of course. So there has been an understanding between the school authorities and the library authorities that the bookmobile vans should visit the schools only when the school hours are over or when there is an interval. At those times, when the bookmobile comes to a particular school, they find the children like humming bees coming out of their classes and assembling around the van and looking at the books, pictures and maps, they browse amongst the books. I have recommended introduction of this system in other district libraries too and all the district libraries, I hope, have already started doing this.

This, of course, is no problem but only a picture of the situation—the bright side of the picture. So in the course of our last two or three years of work over the state, it has been found that even the schools have not proved so very popular in certain areas as the libraries. Nowhere in West Bengal has a library become unpopular. In every rural library, even though the library might not be government sponsored, it may be just a subscription library where books have been collected by small subscriptions from the reading public, every shelf contains books which in the words of Kesavan are shabby and

bedraggled, which is a living testimony to the popularity of the books, of the frequent use which these books are put to. That has been our experience all over. So, with better winds blowing, which I hope will blow in the next five year plan, we will have more provisions. Dr Sen has already told you that we started with a budget of three lakhs and our budget today is 63 lakhs during these four or five years time. And all the money that we had have been spent and we are also taking more from other heads, making ourselves guilty from the others point of view. It does not matter, it will go on. So in the third plan if more money is available the library movement and the library development scheme in West Bengal which has been started on a very moderate scale might mature and grow, might fulfill itself into a much better thing which we all hope for.

SHRI B. S. KESAVAN

Before I call upon the next speaker, I want to read a few relevant paragraphs from the paper which the Librarian of Tamuk, who is unable to be present today has been kind enough to send. I will not bother you with the introduction to the paper which is in general terms envisaging a sort of blueprint for the country, the familiar picture that all of us have been told here in an era of the pyramidal structure with something at the apex and broad based at the pyramid. Now apart from that you have got the actual description here given about Tamuk libraries.

364 rural libraries have so far been started in 280 thanas, rendering service as the basic working units of the district libraries. Establishment of atleast one rural library in each of the twenty-five hundred anchal panchayats is also envisaged in the state plan.

I have now to give you a few of the details of the working, he says, of the district library at Tamuk and then a few suggestions for the improvement and rapid progress of library service in the rural areas. "In our library in Tamuk all the service fronts excepting the training scheme to be started soon, have already started functioning and are doing well. There are four reading rooms, one for children, another for women, a third one is the general reading room for men and the fourth one the newspaper and periodicals reading room." There

are 1,500 registered members. Average daily reading is 100 members. The attendance in the newspaper and periodical section averages about 50. The special feature of the newspaper section is the display of hand written wall paper containing the world news in brief, which has earned much appreciation from the local public. The daily average circulation of books from the district library to its rural units is 500 approximately, and over 1,500 men, women and children are daily enjoying the benefits of the free library service through the rural library centre. Then follows the remarkable statement which I wish Mr. Ramranjan Bhattacharyay was here to analyse, but anyway I will read it as it is. "The district library has so far been able to reach seven lakhs of people in the district the total population being twenty lakhs." Now that is a very remarkable statement on all grounds. I shall have to have a few more details on this particular point because the distribution of rural service to seven lakhs of people means a ramification—a routine—the book collection and staff implications of which are really not to be smiled at. Therefore, I should be very grateful to him, as the *primum mobile* in these matters if we are favoured with a short of write-up on this particular aspect of the district library of Tanjore and the reaching of the seven lakhs of people and the staff implications and the storage implications that it implies. Because to me it is a very happy statement as you said a very bright side indeed a statement which cannot be made with such confidence in any other part of India. I am only highlighting this because as librarians in Bengal it is very necessary for us to annotate that statement rather deeply and to go into the ramifications thereof and to work out the particular scheme to find out exactly what implications these have as that is very necessary for us.

Then follows a very interesting paragraph. The organization of Pathasabir, or the mobile reading camp—an innovation of the district library at Tanjore—has created a great reading interest among the rural public. The special feature for extending library service to women is the provision for supply books to them through messengers subject to the observation of certain rules.

The children's section of the library has also achieved

considerable success within a short period. The special feature of the section is the holding of on the spot meetings by the children themselves, choosing their own president and their own guest-in-chief and the programme comprises songs, dances, recitations, storytelling, caricature and they are also very conscious about reading.

**SHRI B. B. MOHANTY (D. S. E. O., Dhenkanal, Orissa)**

I shall speak first social education and adult education in Orissa, and then report about the activities of the library movement as far as Orissa is concerned.

As the District Social Education Organizer in charge of a district, my first hand experience is confined to the district of Dhenkanal. However, as I have been in the field of social education for the last seven years, I have a general idea of the conditions in Orissa.

Before the launching of the community projects in 1952 in the state the movement of social education was very narrow in its scope and I think this is applicable to all the states in India. There was one adult education officer in the directorate of education and under him there are district organizers of adult education in each state. Their activities are to organize adult literacy centres in each district. So the movement was confined just to starting of these adult literacy centres and just to continue the follow-up programme of the neo-literates. In 1952 when the community projects were launched in the state there were only three community projects, in the districts of Kalahandi, Balasore and Ganjam. After the launching of these community projects, the social education movement began to gain momentum. In each community project there is one chief social education organizer and six social education organizers.

There was a problem of co-ordination between the development department in the community projects administration and the education department. In the project area consisting of about, say, 100 villages, the chief social education organizer and his team of S.E.O.'s organize social activities beginning from adult education centres upto libraries, community centres, recreation centres and other group activities. And the state's social education officer was responsible for the co-ordination of all these chief social education organizers and

also these district adult education organizers who were functioning before the launching of the community projects. So the government decided that these adult education organizers will be withdrawn from the districts covered by community projects. As a result, three district organizers have been withdrawn and three social education organizers, besides their normal duties in the community project area, took up this duty in the non-project area in the district. The Simla Development Commissioner's Conference having decided that the chief social education organizers will be appointed as district social education organizers, Orissa now has three districts social education organizers from 1956. So the problem of co-ordination was particularly marked from 1952 to 1956.

The picture is now is that in each district there is a district social education officer serving under the directorate of education and in each block there is one male SEO. Of course, a lady SEO is also supposed to be there, but this has not been possible in every block due to lack of trained personnel. The districts have a district social education organizer and at the state level there is the adult education officer to supervise the movement. And the different activities which are now done in the field of social education are divided between the community development block and the education department. The education department at the headquarters has a laboratory of audio visual aids so that they can produce some of these long projected visual aids as also projected visual aids such as film strips. They also took over the library movement and at the same time the community project administration also organized social education activities. But it is the overall responsibility of the education department at the state level and the district social education organizer at the district level to supervise the activities. Unfortunately Orissa does not have the structural pattern that obtains in Bengal with district libraries, subdivisional libraries and village libraries. We have, at the district level, a district public relations reading room which is maintained by the department of public relations. This however does not lend books to the villagers. And only Dhenkanal district has an integrated library service started in 1952. This started as an experiment in the first five year plan and has been continuing through the second,

and I hope in the third five year plan every district will have integrated library service. I shall now mention some of the problems in our library movement.

The government sometimes feels that the villagers should not be given the responsibility of selecting books for their own libraries. The directorate of education grants money to the village libraries through the DSEO, and the government feels that they should have the power to select books and recommend the books to be possessed by these libraries.

SHRI B. S. KLSAVAN

But has there been any instance where the villagers themselves got together and wanted certain books and where there was a conflict between the authorities and the villagers and if so, what was the nature of the books that the villagers wanted and what was the nature of the authority that denied it to them?

SHRI B. B. MOHANTY

As far as I am concerned personally, this situation gets on my nerves because we are spoiling the enthusiasm of the people and in the long run spoiling the group action which is the essence of social education. In one instance, in a very small village where the people are not very highly educated, but not illiterate, the older generation wanted to purchase some books like mythology and such, whereas the younger generation wanted trash novels in Oriya and Hindi. Applications came from both sides to the DSEO. Now what am I to do? I considered both the applications and paid a visit to the village. Had discussion with each group separately and together, and I could see that the village library already contained some books which should not have been there. These were trash novels, books on magic and that sort of thing.

And in that particular village I found that there were not many books on mythology or morals or popular science and similar subjects. So there is the problem. With the scheme of democratic decentralization of the second plan going into effect all over India, when people at the panchayat level are going to plan and execute their own activities, they have to be given the responsibility to select their own books. I remember Mr. Nehru, when he spoke in the last National Development Council meeting where the scheme of democratic decen-

tralization was considered, said that if the people are to do something let them do and learn by their own mistakes. If they have the right to do something they have also the right to learn through their mistakes. Well, that is very interesting, but in this library you find that there are some books which should not have been there, but what are you going to do? I feel that the library's independence should not be spoiled. But at the same time, the DSEO's have to do something, because if he does not, the younger people who have a certain amount of influence will fill the racks of libraries with not so desirable books. This is problem No. 1.

And problem No. 2 is this. The publishers in Orissa are always after textbooks. And even the so called elite among the authors concentrate on textbooks because they feel that will bring in more money for them. The libraries say that they have to spend their allocation by 31st March, so they have to buy the available books. The authors and the publishers say who will buy books other than textbooks if we write and publish them? Libraries should have influence over the publishers so that the publishers will get after the writers to write books on all subjects and not just textbooks. This is one role of the library which has not been fulfilled in Orissa.

These are the two most vexing problems which in my opinion should be discussed here and I shall be grateful for any suggestions offered for their solution.

Libraries should be closely linked with the follow-up activities of adult literacy centers. What happens now is, when a neo-literate after six months goes back to the fields he tries to keep up his new found learning through the libraries. But all too often the library does not have the resources to cater to him and he falls back to illiteracy. I was very disturbed to find that a young man of 22 whom I had personally examined and to whom I had issued a literacy certificate could not read a single word in a leading Orissa newspaper after six months. He could not even write his own name. He said the library was no help to him and it was full of young people reading and discussing 'modern novels'. Well, the group discussion spirit is good but I feel that it should be channeled in the proper direction so that it leads to group action and community development in general.



The average percentage of literacy in Orissa is 11 to 12% and the working group on education which discussed the different aspects of education programme in Orissa think that the machinery of social education should be such as to be able to increase the percentage of literacy to 30 by the end of the third year plan. I think they may be too optimistic.

Now that democratic decentralization is coming to Orissa in the near future, the planners and the government hope that the panchayats will have their mobile services so that every individual village will get the books, and at the panchayat level there will be a panchayat library, at the block panchayat samity level there will be a block library, at the district level there will be a district library and at the state level there will be the state library.

Library Associations do not exist in Orissa and even where they do they are not very effective or active. However, in the course of time when the panchayats will be responsible for the operation, management and the executional planning of the libraries, I feel the problem will be solved and simultaneously these voluntary agencies will also come to be.

SHRI B. S. KISAVAN

There are a few things that I do not know, if you will allow me to clarify them. We are receiving every publication published in Orissa for purposes of the compilation of the Indian National Bibliography. The full count of these publications comes to an average of about 500. That is a number which I want to sink into our minds. You take the population of Orissa, you take the hopes we have, you take the plan projects that are afoot, the libraries that are to be built up, now even granting that it comes up to a thousand—and a thousand should be a fairly good number—is an officer concerned with the buying of books for libraries how do you manage at all to get books into a library of any size?

We also have tabulated the receipts from Orissa and we find that out of these five hundred or six hundred volumes 60% are on functional themes and 40% are covered by what you have been pleased to call trash. And also some of the social sciences and quite a few literal rudimentary publications in the sciences also. Now even granting that tomorrow Orissa is going to set out upon a very visionary plan for developing

the literacy and also the library programme of that state, unless of course there is the other implication that not only books in Oriya, but also books in Hindi, Bengali and quite a few other neighbouring languages are drawn upon as far as furnishing the library is concerned, where are you going to get enough books to meet the demand? This is a problem which interests me and I am sure interests most of you as you are listening to him

SHRI B. B. MOHANTY

We are trying to establish writers' cooperatives in Orissa. If these are run successfully, they will have considerable influence on the publishers and the publishers can be induced to bring out more and more good books. So we expect this problem to be solved when the number of cooperatives increases in Orissa.

MISS RUTH C. KRUEGER (Director of Library Service, U.S.S., Calcutta)

Mr. Mohanty says that one of his problems is conflict in book selection. One side comes to him and says we want this type of books and the other side comes to him and demands another type of books. Would a committee representing each faction and working with a certain definite budget solve the problem? This is just an idea that came into my mind when the problem was posed.

SHRI B. B. MOHANTY

Actually for each village library there is a library committee which is supposed to make up the list of books wanted and send it to the DSLO for approval. If this list contains books which in the opinion of the DSLO are not desirable, he generally writes back to the committee telling them to reconsider them. Also in some cases as I have been doing he straightway goes to the village, discusses the matter with the committee members and explains why these titles are not good for the library. The best thing would be to tackle the problem in a democratic principle, neither the DSLO for the committee taking the upper hand but coming to a common ground by discussion and then selecting the books. I think that clears the problem.

SHRI TINGORI DARTTA (Vice President, Bengal Library Association).

I shall be glad to know if there is any list of recommended

books such as is published for Bengali books by our education directorate and also published by the Bengal Library Association

SHRI B. B. MOHANTI

Every six months the directorate of education recommends certain books and this list is published in the Orissa Gazette and also in the local dailies of Orissa. We call it the list of books recommended for libraries.

SHRI NIKHIL RANJAN ROY

By way of clarification, as the list prepared by the education directorate of the West Bengal Government has come in for mention here, I would like to point out two things. There are practically two lists. One is a list of school text books and school library books which is periodically published in the Calcutta Gazette. This is just a continuation of an old tradition: in pre-independence days every book used to be looked at from the political point of view of whether it is seditious or not. That tradition still continues in so far as school libraries and school prize books are concerned. But apart from that another list is being prepared which has nothing to do with school libraries or school prize books. This is prepared by the education directorate and is a free publication which is supplied to all the public libraries that receive grants from the government. This is not a recommendative list. Whether you can recommend such books to public libraries is a question of democratic responsibility, intellectual ability and other things. Of course, in making the selection care is taken to see that perverse and undesirable books are left out. But this is a suggestive list and every library is free to make its own selection, if necessary with the help of this list because lots of books are being published every month and it is not always possible for the village librarian to get hold of the information of all the publications that are coming out. And in making this selection, of course, it is not possible for one person or even half a dozen persons to read every book and to find out what it contains. But the list is prepared in consultation with reviews that are published with book catalogues and publicity and even the books themselves. Also the suggestions from readers, collected by librarians, are also welcome. On the basis of these, the list is prepared every

year and supplied free to all the libraries which the libraries are requested to consult in making their own selections, but they are never asked to follow this list and this list alone.

**SHRI B. S. KESAVAN** In this connection a couple of remarks I would like to make which might be relevant. You will all be happy to know that part of this problem will be solved by the fact that the Indian language fascicules of the national bibliography has already been published in several languages. Malayalam, Kannda, Urdu, Bengali is being printed just now. The Sahitya Akademy in Orissa has undertaken this job and they are printing the book, with the result that they are all very cheaply priced and they are available and accessible to the remote librarian within the particular province. All the year's publications are there. For practical reasons it is not possible to make this more frequent, because even the annual publications has a very small format and if you increase the periodicity of it you will find that you might have to distribute sheets of paper on occasions as far as local publications are concerned.

**SHRI D. N. SINHA** (Deputy Director of Education, Bihar)

I must confess that I do not have much experience of the public library system.

In Bihar we have elaborate organization of public library system. We have at the centre at Patna a Central State Library, of which Mr. P. N. Gouri is the librarian, and we have seventeen district central libraries in each of the district headquarters. Each district central library is not government recognized, but a few are. For example, the district library at Ranchi, the one at Dhanbad, the one at Chaibasa and a few others are purely government managed institutions. But the others are the old district libraries which have not been taken over, but have been renamed district central libraries, although their management continues to be private and these libraries are being aided to a very considerable extent by the State.

These libraries affiliate the libraries in the rural areas. I think by now we have about three thousand such libraries in the villages and most of these are affiliated to the district libraries, which, apart from their own stock of books, get

books from the district central libraries. These district central libraries are almost all, I think, provided with book mobiles and these vans take books to these libraries at regular intervals.

These libraries in the villages are also community centres, generally speaking. They are a meeting place where people free from the day's work sit together and discuss certain affairs and read books and they have a very good social gathering there. But I must confess that I do not feel that the impact of these libraries so far has been as it should have been. It is not as if these libraries have changed the habits of the people. As was pointed out by the moderator in the course of his introductory remarks, the one purpose of the public library these days should be to bring about a change in the life of the people. If living is an art, books should teach us that art and I do not think that these libraries have been able to teach the people the art of living properly and enriching their lives. They have certainly given them some information, but information alone is not education. They have perhaps given them recreation, they read a number of books which they find interesting.

Perhaps the books which could change their lives are not yet interesting to them. Those books, whose purpose is to give information on popular science, social sciences on certain other aspects which could enrich the lives of the people are not yet perhaps written in a way which could have a hold on the readers. If the printed page grips the reader, the library should be considered successful. The libraries should have a collection of books which has that attraction associated with what has been called trash books. These trash books may be bad, but there is an element in those books which somehow or other attracts people. We do not want them to read it and yet they read it. That shows that there is some aspect of it which is remarkable and which has to be kept in mind. If the makers of books which are on the subjects that we would like our people to read could also imbibe that attraction in the presentation of their materials, it could immensely help to make the library movement more popular and successful. As yet, I don't feel that these libraries in Bihar have made that impact on people.

My impression has been that the small number of books

in the village libraries are being used quite frequently I don't believe that the libraries in urban areas are used much more than in the villages I have seen libraries in urban areas which are, as I pointed out, very attractive, placed in glass cases for everybody to look at, but they are not dog-eared, they do not show signs of having been dirtied by frequent use I have visited some village libraries in my capacity of Divisional Inspector of Schools and I found that the books were in many cases more dog-eared than in the urban libraries

We finance these rural libraries through a system of coupons We have a superintendent of libraries for the state whose office is in the Central State Library at Patna He has certain allotments at his disposal for the distribution to the public libraries as also to school libraries, mainly to high school libraries He distributes grants through these coupons These coupons are sent to the libraries and schools and on the strength of these they can buy a number of books from the booksellers nominated by the state government We have what is called a Granth Suchi which is published by the state government of Bihar and that contains a number of books which are considered suitable for libraries But it is not very obligatory Of course, it is generally recommended that they should make their choice from that list, but they are free in some cases to select other books also But that of course they can do from their own funds, and I think so far as the books to be purchased out of the coupons are concerned, they have to make their choice from the Granth Suchi

Unfortunately, some unscrupulous publishers and booksellers who happen to be nominated by the state government try to push the sale of their own publications

**SHRI B S KESAVAN** I am interested to know how that happens For example, if a certain number of coupons are sent to you I presume that the coupons are money coupons, i.e., for that amount you can buy any book that you want but that means that the local librarian is influenced by the publishers to buy his own publications

**SHRI D N SINHA** Yes Of course, it is very difficult for any booksellers to stock all the books that are listed there because that required, according to our calculation, a capital

of atleast fifty thousand rupees to have five copies each. It is a very big list and I think that it contains quite a large number of books which may be suitable for libraries. So it is not possible for any bookseller or publisher to have in ready stock all those books. It sometimes happens that the bookseller expresses his inability to supply the books wanted by a particular school or library, and he pleads with the buyer and persuades him to buy his own publications. He makes quite a good profit and the library is supplied with a limited number of books, better than which it could have otherwise purchased. This tendency has, however, been curbed to a very considerable extent and libraries are free to buy any books they like.

In many villages enthusiastic workers who have quite a good collection of books also collect funds locally to buy books. The more popular books in the villages, I should say, are the books on religion and books like Mahabharat and Ramayan are even now read quite frequently, and of course, fiction is very popular. The reading room is more popular than the library itself.

I am in charge of secondary education and we have been trying to enrich the libraries of secondary schools. They are, of course, making quite good progress.

**SHRI B. S. KISAVAN** Please tell me if the impression I have got is wrong.

Some years back I went to one of the local workshops in Calcutta and I found a whole fleet of bookmobiles being manufactured for Bihar and each one of them was like a Jugernaut. Is it true, as far as these bookmobiles are concerned that a few of them are unusable because of the very weight of their manufacture?

**SHRI D. N. SINHA** It has been found to be somewhat too bulky in size for the roads in Bihar. In fact, some accidents occurred to some of our officers. A few of them might be lying idle due to some administrative difficulties like lack of a driver, lack of allotment, or even due to mismanagement. I wonder if the other states are doing much better, but I think most of our vans are being used.

**SHRI NIKHIL RANJAN ROY** I am interested in your reference to the coupon system. I would like to know how it differs from the grant-in-aid system. When you make the

coupon available to a particular library, is the coupon non-relapsable or is it relapsable like our ordinary grant-in-aid?

SHRI D N SINHA As you might be aware, when the government makes over a certain allotment to a non-government organization the question of its being relapsable perhaps does not arise. So far as the governments are concerned that amount is considered already spent the moment the grant is made. But we certainly expect that organization to utilize it in the course of a month or so. The local officers are there to see that they do utilize it.

SHRI B S KESAVAN Supposing these coupons are given to a government institution, supposing the superintendent of libraries issues a thousand rupees worth of coupons to a particular library.

SHRI D N SINHA No government is given coupons.

SHRI B S KESAVAN Non-government institutions do not have to spend it within the financial year?

SHRI D N SINHA Not necessarily. Not as strictly as the government institutions are expected to do.

SHRI NIKHIL RANJAN ROY Perhaps I have not been able to make my point clear. I know that non-government institutions are not obliged to spend the money, to utilize the money within the financial year. That is true. My point is, can the coupon go along even after the financial year?

SHRI B S KESAVAN Can this year's coupons buy next year's books?

SHRI D N SINHA No, I do not think so.

SHRI D N SINHA (CONT'D) Perhaps I created some confusion about the coupon system. The coupons are lapsable. My obsession with the problems of secondary education and secondary school was responsible for that confusion.

For non-government secondary schools we get grants, which in some cases they may use even after the close of the financial year. But that is not so in the case of these coupons which have to be presented to the booksellers fairly early so that the booksellers also may be able to collect all these coupons and present them to the state government to get their money before 31st March.

SHRI K C THAKUR (Librarian, District Library, Ranchi, Bihar).

My comments will be confined to a district only because



I am in charge of a district. I shall try to give a bare outline of the working of the district state library at Ranchi.

Before I come to my point I have to comment on the library movement and the part played by the Government of Bihar in progressing that movement. There are about three thousand libraries which are recognized and are receiving annual grants from the government. But that does not mean that only three thousand libraries exist. A good number of libraries are not affiliated up till now and do not get any government grant. And to these twenty-five hundred non-government libraries, the government have simply granted some annual grant up to now and nothing else. The Bihar government intends to establish a perfect library system in the state, having one central district library at the headquarters. The headquarters will have a better library in respect of the district libraries although those divisional headquarters are also district headquarters. So there is the state library, then the four divisional headquarters libraries and all the districts will have district libraries.

During the second five year plan new sub-divisional libraries have also been started. And after this scheme the next target will be the establishing of thana libraries, block libraries and rural libraries.

Grants paid to the libraries vary according to the status of the institutions. There are several categories and certain criteria prescribed for each type of library and according to that grants are given.

In Ranchi there were no public libraries in the true sense of the term. All the existing libraries are subscription libraries and people had the impression that these were meant for the privileged class. So when the district library of Ranchi was started it was also taken in the same light by the public, but slowly when they came to know that this library is a free library, when the library began to perform some extra curricular activities like book exhibitions, lectures, film shows and group discussions, people gradually came to know about the importance of the district library and began to come in increasing numbers.

Aims and objectives are present, but adequate resources to fulfill these are lacking. The district library has a limited

number of books which is not sufficient to cater to the needs of the whole district. Anyway the service has been started and has proved popular.

We have at present about ten thousand volumes, which in my opinion is a very meagre stock to serve the district.

There are three sections of the district library—the central, the mobile and the children's section. The children's and central sections are functioning for the local people only. The mobile section is wholly responsible for the rural area and that work is done with the help of bookmobile and cycle porters.

With the bookmobile we give two types of services—direct and indirect. Direct services go directly to the villages which are on the road side and cater to the needs of the people in areas where there are no libraries. Indirect services are those where the book mobile van functions as a delivery van and delivers books to some of the institutions such as schools, gram panchayats or village libraries and other small libraries and they according to their own rules and regulations circulate the books. We have no control over their rules and regulations and we only take from them data about circulation and number of readers.

It has been my experience, however, that we do participate in community life. When we first planned the services there was practically no response. But gradually not only the response for books has increased but we have been invited to attend social functions, where we arrange lectures or musical or other performances. There is a plan to show cinemas to the villagers as the bookmobile supplied to us has a screen at the back. We have a trailer at present which can be used to carry our projector, but unfortunately we have not received our projector as yet. Therefore at present we take the help of the Modh Mandali. This is a body of artists employed by the education department and they are placed at our disposal when we require their services. With their help we go to the villages, perform some sort of musical performance or we arrange some lectures, and thereby we actually take part in and mix with their community life. In my opinion the response in Ranchi is not poor, although we are poor in supplying adequate resources to our patrons. If we

are backed with adequate resources, I am sure the services which we have in view can be rendered more fully and successfully

**SHRI NIKHIL RANJAN ROY** Mr Thakur was referring to three thousand libraries which have been recognized by the government and affiliated. What is the process of this recognition, what are the criteria fixed for this recognition by the government and to which body are these libraries affiliated?

**SHRI K C THAKUR** The proper authority to explain this is absent. As far as my knowledge goes these libraries are classed A, B, C, and D. I do not know the complete criteria but some of the facts taken into consideration are whether the library has got its own building, the stock of books, the staff, etc. And affiliation here is not a vague term, it indicates that the library receives grant from the government, but is not government controlled.

**SHRI B S KESAVAN** You will find that in many cases, grants and affiliation depends upon not merely objective criteria, but very strictly subjective and personal criteria. For example, it is very well known that in the Corporation of Calcutta it all depends on how powerful a particular councillor is before he gets an amount of money for his particular library. And also, it depends upon how strong an MLA in a particular locality is before he can possibly get the amount of money for his particular library. So we find that in our country the criteria, however much they might be laid out as blueprint, depends upon the personal pull or force of a particular MLA or a local councillor or other extraneous tendencies. Why, it is also known, and I think Miss Krueger will support me, it all depends on how strong a Senator is, it depends upon the lot of lobbying in Congress circles the amount of things they secure for their own home town and how much money they get for it. So this is not merely our Indian feature, it is a universal feature, it is a human feature. And I suppose you will have to wait for the time when consciousness develops to such a degree that some objective criteria are arrived at as far as grants and recognitions to the libraries are concerned.

Bihar was one of our greatest problems when we were writing the report of the Library Advisory Committee. The problem of Bihar is this. The subscription library is like

an epidemic in Bihar. You will find that in every other place there is a subscription library.

We have actually seen these libraries function, we have on-the-spot inspections, we cross-examined the people good-humoredly and we did get to know the brass tacks of the situation. In many of these places you find that these are all lamps that have been lit of old by men of vision. But they all have run short in the way of enthusiasm and personnel and the wick is very smoky from want of trimming. And what little oil you get there at the present moment in the way of government grants is something which makes the smoke a little more smoky and it really does not give very much light. The principle has, therefore, been suggested in the Library Advisory Committee report that in the course of time the grants of these libraries should be given on these conditions. By all means take money from us, but we will give you ten years of time. Meanwhile you will have to adjust yourself to modern conditions and to the basic principles of a public library, meaning free, tidy, systematised service to man, woman and child as and when they want it. That is the situation, and I am sure that the time will very soon come within the next twenty or twenty-five years whenby all these subscription libraries might evolve into really public libraries.

SHRI R. C. DAS (Secretary Assam Seva Samiti). Assam is composed of so many districts many of which have different languages of their own. Out of our eleven districts only six know Assamese, four districts contain tribal people who speak different languages, and in Cachar district they speak Bengali. So language is the most difficult problem in Assam and to purchase books for libraries we have to consider what books and in what languages.

The library movement in Assam dates back to the fifteenth century when Vaishnavism had flourished there. Due to the efforts of Sri Sankardev, the great social and religious reformer in Assam and his disciples, we have some Satras. Satras are religious or cultural centers where the disciples also used to live. They introduced the system of Namgar, or Kirtangar or prayer houses as you may call them and to these prayer houses they introduced religious books. And the literary and learned

people read these scriptures to the young disciples, who later devoted their time to promote Vaishnavism. They preserved these religious books and they established so many Namghars or prayer houses in different parts of Assam that every village in the districts of Assam has a Namghar. It is a cultural and community centre, where we have judicial enquiries, theatrical performances and so on. Shankardev used to write dramas also. He was the earliest drama writer in the whole of India.

Then you come to the modern age. Previously the Ahom Kings also had some libraries where they preserved books and records of a historical nature. These were, however, kept for their own purposes and was beyond the reach of the common mass of people. The use of the modern library has been known to the people of Assam only after modern education was introduced in the 19th century. During these years many libraries have grown by public enterprise without much financial stability or technical ability.

The present standard of library service in Assam is not upto the mark and there is enormous scope for its improvement. The poor condition prevailing may be due to many factors such as want of funds, want of trained personnel etc. I want to emphasize the latter because in Assam there are only a few persons who are trained in this line and most of the libraries are managed by people who are not trained. However, growing consciousness for the library movement during the last decade is encouraging.

The Assam Libraries Sangha was established in 1937 and through voluntary approach the Sangha contributed to a great extent to accelerate the library movement in Assam. Under the auspices of the Congress coalition government formed in 1938 a mass literacy campaign was launched in 1940. This campaign brought about consciousness about literacy and therefore many libraries were established in rural areas. The social education wing of the education department came into existence in 1950 and replaced the mass literacy campaign. At present it is giving grants to 786 libraries in rural areas and spending Rs. 37 000/- annually.

The grants range from Rs. 50/- to Rs. 500/- and the libraries run by the community project under development

schemes also get grants. The Assam state government welcomes the scheme of improvement of library service sponsored by the Central Government in 1954 and established seven district libraries in the plain district headquarters of Assam, and a central library in the state capital. Four bookmobiles also have been purchased and all these mobile vans have been attached to the offices of the four Inspectors of schools in Assam. But the remaining four hill districts do not yet have district libraries and the state librarian informed me that this is due to lack of funds. 32 lakhs was spent in establishing the seven libraries in the districts and one central library at the capital.

**SHRI B S KESAVAN** And the tribal spirit is also somewhat against sooped-up libraries, don't you think? There are certain natural difficulties in the way.

**SHRI R C DAS** They don't like to learn Assamese or Bengali, they have their own dialect. The Garos want books in Garos but they have no writers. Similarly, the Khasias want their own dialect, but they too have no writers. The Mikhirs are very poor and there are very few educated persons among them. But in the Lushai hills the percentage of education, specially female education is the highest in India.

There are four bookmobiles and they are all attached to the Inspectors of schools and there are ten deposit centres under each district library. The deposit centres have books on the following topics: Vocational training, agriculture, cottage industries and cooperatives, home health and recreation, easy reading, classical literature, etc. This central library is organized on modern ways. It is copyright library for whole state of Assam, it also purchases books in bulk and renders technical library service such as classification and cataloguing for the whole state.

Then there are some libraries in the rural areas of Assam, numbering about three thousand, but unfortunately most of them have been unable to serve the cherished goal. So it is high time to check the mushroom growth of the libraries in the rural areas, but most of the libraries in the rural areas have their own accommodation, but very few books and very few readers. Mostly those on the committee take books home.

and maintain the library, but the actual mass do not get any benefit out of these libraries

There are 200 children's libraries in Assam and these were established with the resources of the children's welfare organizations which came into existence after the central social welfare board was formed

SHRI B S KISAVAN I have been trying very hard to get some children's books in Assamese. The results are not very encouraging and taking the age group between 6 and 12, the number that I received could not go beyond 54 or 55 books. That is the present state of affairs. Now if there are 200 children's libraries, what are they doing?

SHRI R C DAS They have got libraries but the number of books they keep in their libraries is not very high. We have got very few books in Assam regarding children's literature. Only recently a publication board was formed in Assam and the government is giving grants to writers and we are getting some books written and published through government grants.

SHRI PHANI BHUSIAN ROY (Bengal Library Association) You have mentioned before that public libraries should be absolutely free to local people and it can be utilized by all types and classes of people. But in our lectures here we have not clarified to what extent that condition is actually being established in our country. Particularly in Bengal we are finding that subscription libraries are being helped. Of course, more book materials are being made available to the people of the country and the state. But to what extent we are gradually being able to establish that ideal library condition?

Secondly, my friend Mr Das has pointed out that there is some mushroom growth of libraries. My personal reaction is that this is due to the impact of education on the information hunger on a backward economy, particularly backward transport condition. People may not be able to travel quite a few miles to get at books, so naturally these uneconomic units are developing. How are we going to check these mushroom growths at all, and to what extent? Because as these things are growing we can presume that people of the locality are supporting them to some extent. To what extent can you benefit society by checking this growth is also a point I would like to know.

**SHRI B S KESAVAN** Mr Das, of course, took care of the first point. But as far as I am concerned I think the answer is obvious. Except for the Delhi Public Library nowhere in India today have you any library which answers to the ideal description of a public library. We are evolving towards it very slowly. You will find that unless and until the concept gains ground in this country that inevitable funds should accrue to the development of libraries through budgetary provisions, through statutory legislation, you will never find any library develop to its full stature as a public library.

**SHRI R C DAS** I would like to emphasize that mushroom libraries should be checked. I have seen many libraries growing in villages without any basic foundation. In some cases libraries are established only in order to get grants. The Social Education Officer told me that sometimes the amount granted is as little as fifty rupees. And the recipient often has to spend fifty rupees for travelling expenses. So there is no money left for the library. Similarly different groups of persons try to build up libraries in a sense of rivalry. It is therefore essential to have co-ordination between these varied efforts. We must establish libraries in such a manner that everybody gets an opportunity to read books.

**QUESTION** In some libraries people borrow books, but fail to return them. It has become difficult for the librarian to get back the books. Can you suggest how this problem can be solved?

**SHRI B S KESAVAN** It is a problem which touches me also, only it is not upto great proportions. Also it so happens that the people who are not willing to return books are people of great standing also not a question of an ignorant or illiterate person. But there is no solution to that problem, no answer which can easily be given. General consciousness, civic consciousness is the only answer and a certain moral compulsion, a certain social compulsion and also a remarkable tact that the personality of the librarian should exercise. Also threat if need be, of a very gentle kind. I mean there is no easy solution to this problem. We cannot do it. It depends on the general level of upliftment of the community.

In this connection let me tell you a small story. When I first came as in charge of the National Library I was brim



ming with quite a number of so called progressive modern notions. So when somebody told me that there was a system of fines being levied in the library I grew red in the face and called the Office Superintendent and said "This is primitive, this is unheard of. The system of fines is a punitive measure and it is a barbarous procedure. This is the National Library. Off with it." And forthwith the librarian of the National Library, in a fit of pious power and with great moral indignation dictated the following order. Hereafter no fines will be levied for the late return of books. I said you must trust the people, you write to them and they will get you. The Office Superintendent was very respectful, but he said "Sir, are you sure the order should go through?" I said, "yes, it must get through and it went through." The result was, my friends books were issued very rapidly and for the period of eight months we did not have many returns of books. There were 7,500 volumes due to the library and these had not been returned for a period of 6 to 8 months inspite of half a dozen reminders. I called in the Office Superintendent again and asked him what I was to do about it. He said "Sir, you have to face the audit now because it is your delightful initiative—of course he did not say delightful, he was very respectful—"the audit is coming in about a month's time and what are you going to do about it?"

My temperatüre came down quite a bit by then and all that moral indignation had evaporated and the librarian felt very uneasy as it was about to pinch his own pocket. Then the Office Superintendent said "Sir may I suggest one thing? We can inform all the defaulters that if the books are not returned within three weeks of the date of writing the price of the book will be forfeited from the deposit of the borrower." Well, we did that and I am very happy to say that six thousand odd volumes were returned within the three weeks stipulated.

You could not do the same thing today because the National Library gets sterling and dollar books through the graciousness of quite a number of institutions abroad and by exchange methods, by gifts, by donations, by Wheat Loan provisions. Many of these technical books are not available locally and many of our distinguished borrowers are quite prepared to forfeit their deposit cheerfully when once they

borrow the books. However, today the picture will be quite different and if you ask how we manage to assure the return of books, it is by the very barbarous, primitive, horrible but very necessary method of levying one anna a day as fine for delay in return of books. And another thing, no valuable dollar or sterling book is issued at all and it is kept in the reference collection for all the people to use.

**SHRI SUBODH MUKHERJEE** The development of public libraries in Bengal has been going on steadily and slowly. But the Association has not much to do with this development. Except for the training of library personnel, the rest of the work that we were doing for the last 25 years and more has now slowly been taken over by the government. The government is organizing library movement in the state with more men and money that they have at their disposal.

The district library organizations have done the necessary spade work. The Association has only been giving technical advice when it is sought by libraries. Our main function at present is the training of library personnel. We are running a certificate course, and also a week end course. There are also camp trainings as and when required. The Association also publishes technical books, but the number is limited due to want of funds. We publish a monthly organ called "Grantha-gai" which supplies information generally of a technical nature.

We hope that our government will help us more and more. We have been doing what we can in our field for the last 25 years and the government has only come to our aid during the last four years. A very small initial grant which had been sanctioned has again been reduced.

I do not know the exact position of libraries in other states, but from the report of the Advisory Committee, we find that far-off states, especially Madras and Kerala have been doing very excellent work through the Associations. We do not have any good or clear-cut picture about the work that the Associations of neighbouring states, delegates from which we have in our midst today have been doing. Compared with the neighbouring states we can say that the Bengal Library Association has been doing really good work. But as I told you sometimes before, though much has been done, much remains to be done and we hope that

we will continue our efforts and not stop until we reach the goal

**SHRI TINGORI DUTTA** We have heard something about mushroom libraries. Here in Bengal we think that one or two hundred libraries are enough, but I had been to Kerala recently for three days and I found that in the ten thousand villages in Kerala, there are three thousand libraries which are getting government grants and their book stock is not less than 600, going up to ten thousand. And so you find that for every three villages there is a library and these libraries are very popular. Malabar district is now part of Kerala. It is now divided into three districts and within these three districts I found another eight hundred subscription libraries to which the Kerala government gives grants. Whatever the form of government, there is so much demand for books and such great library consciousness among the people that they are going far ahead. We want that demand created here also. We will not remain satisfied with just a few libraries.

In the small state of Kerala I found that the government is paying forty thousand rupees to the Kerala State Library Association for its maintenance and three lakhs and twenty-five thousand as grants-in-aid to the libraries. Even though library legislation is there, besides the contribution, the 800 libraries are given grants in aid in Malabar Area.

Of course the question of affiliation to the State Library Association came in Kerala but there any library satisfying the conditions is getting a grant even though they are not members of the Association. So it is not strictly necessary that they should be members of some association, but they only have to satisfy certain essential conditions.

We should not remain satisfied till we get free libraries. The service should be free, at least to a certain extent in the intervening period. We could have a rental collection for the light literature, new books and fiction, but why not give some free service out of the public funds we are contributing for the library service? We have a nice set up here, but we should start that experiment right now and give the service free, atleast on certain categories of books.

To create demand among the people, you have to grow and work in rural areas, give books to the rural libraries and

to do that you have to make the service free and we have to experiment with it. I hope this problem will be tackled.

**SHRI PHANI BHUSHAN ROY** The theme of our discussion is the relationship between the library and the community. I believe that we shall have to decide the position in which the library stands now. We shall have to check up whether the library is completely integrated into the community whether the library can give service to all members of the community or not. We have seen that for so many reasons our libraries, as they are now, cannot completely serve the people of the country.

The main difficulty that stands in our way is the want of education. If we have to restrict ourselves completely to book centre libraries that means distribution centres of books in whatever form, by making mobiles available, our service will not reach all the sections of the community. So my opinion is that we shall have to think on the basis of the condition of the country and find out our own solution. On this basis I found that since we live in a condition of mixed economy, having side by side agricultural and industrial factors when we want to develop we have got to integrate these two systems. So far our country is concerned we shall have to think in terms of making the people literate. We shall have to integrate the whole policy by making the library a social and cultural centre of the community.

For instance, in Ichapur, which is an industrial area, in no library could I see any books giving technical information. No doubt there is a dearth of books on that subject. But even available publications were not there. So naturally a particular section of the community residing there cannot completely benefit themselves from it.

Many people cannot utilize the printed materials that they do have. We can easily reorient our thinking and can accommodate them by making some sort of visual aids such as posters and the like, ultimately trying to draw their attention to the books and in that way we can enter into their life. So far as the middle class educated community is concerned we can easily approach them through books. But unless we change our library policy to a certain extent by drawing the uneducated portion of the society into the library sphere, my personal feeling is that we may not be able to draw

them in as large a number as we should. It is well known that if we try to utilize the formal system of education, the present number of illiterates will take a very long time to be literates and ultimately to use the library. So unless the libraries act like some sort of a pulling force inside society, I do not think they can fully develop themselves in the very near future. It may take a long time for them to establish themselves in a society in the position in which they should. So I would appeal particularly to the rural librarians not to consider themselves more or less as book distributing agents. In spite of all our imagination, unless we keep in view that our ultimate aim is to completely cover the society, not only to draw the literate persons into the library but illiterates also to create inside them some sort of hunger for information, I do not think the library service can succeed in the present condition of our country. So whatever our policy is, we shall have to think from the background of our society and plan so that ultimately we can cover up the complete community with our library service.

So far as the plan is concerned, we have seen the existing village libraries. They have got their own difficulties; the government is also trying to help them, but with a few exceptions we do not have any free public library service in the proper sense of the term. Still whatever we have, ultimately we shall have to find a solution for a completely free library service.

We shall have to have a short term plan and a long term plan. For a short term plan Mr. Nikhil Ranjan Roy suggested that specialized stocking of books may help the existing libraries out of their own difficulties. Somehow if they can combine themselves into some sort of co-operative buying, books will not be unnecessarily duplicated in another library. But complete specialisation of stock in one library and another stock in another library is not a practicable solution. One library cannot completely specialize in fiction, another in philosophy. There will be some sort of duplication in that case. So some sort of consulted uniform and co-operative book buying may help them out of this difficulty in a short term policy.

As far as long term policy is concerned, we have been

able to find out from our experience that we have to think about some sort of legislation, to give the library services the necessary funds and the necessary human materials to engage that fund in giving proper service which is so much needed by the country.

SHRI B S KRISAVAN: If you really take stock of what has been done this afternoon, you will find that everyone of us from whatever area we came from has passed the verdict. Wanting. In other words, it is not that we want good advice, everybody knows what to do, and everybody knows how to do it also. The world, as you know, has never suffered from want of advice. Technical advice is there, blueprints have been there galore, but because of various reasons and a good part of it because of human cussedness too, you do find that things are not clinching the way they should.

I entirely agree with Shri P B Roy in his emphasis on the fact that our particular problem is a special problem, i.e., if you have to get large number of people into library mindedness at all, certain techniques have to be adopted, whereby you can as far as possible quicken the process. But I also know as an educationist, that you can do a thing too quickly. Acceleration has its advantages, but it also has certain implications. You can always pump things, but you should not pump too hard that the membrane may not contain all that you pump into it. Therefore, you do find that audio visual aids that you have largely hinted at and which has been mainly in the province of adult education has been thought of already.

The adult educationists are our blood-brothers in every sense of the term. Our points of view do not differ. They are working among the grass roots. They are grappling with the problem of lapsing, they are grappling with the problem of how to get these people. They are really in contact with the masses. And what do they find? No sooner do they get a particular section of the mass upto a particular level after superhuman effort, it is like the fable of Sisyphus and the rock. You find that Sisyphus is a great giant who tried to roll the rock upwards and finally the rock rolled back, and then he had to go all over again and roll it up the incline. So this fable of Sisyphus correctly illustrated the difficulties that the

adult educationists are faced with as far as bringing up of the literacy level is concerned

There is one suggestion that I have to make. One of the things that I have always believed in is "from the known to the unknown". At the present moment in India it is true that the umbra of lack of education, the lack of libraries, is very big. The shadow is very deep, but there is a penumbral region where the rays of the Sun mix with the darkness and there is a certain greyness about this particular area. Now what is happening through the length and breadth of this country is that even the resources that we have today in the way of libraries and library tools have not been properly organized, streamlined and co-ordinated. If priorities have to be mentioned I would certainly agree with you, Phani, that the adult educationist should have a very high priority as far as the work among the masses is concerned. But next to that, almost equal with this priority I would say let us first take stock of the resources we have today in the way of libraries, pseudo-libraries, subscription libraries and quite a few of those other units and collections of books that are there in this country, and let us see to it that the organization of our existing resources are such that whereas we are getting 40% or 35% result from the present chaos and the lack of co-ordination, we shall atleast get about a 100% result from streamlining our existing resources.

For example, you take the cities of Calcutta, Bombay or Madras, you take the urban areas surrounding these great cities, you do find there is so much anarchy, chaos, duplication, slovenliness, callousness on the part of those people. Mind you, money is being spent for books, people are being appointed to take care of books. The amount of money which can be totalled up in this particular country devoted to the expenditure on libraries, though not wonderful or astronomical, amounts to quite a sizeable sum. But what is happening to this expenditure? If you take stock of these and if you review the situation on hand you find that a lot of this money is like drops of rainwater upon a vast desert area, where no sooner the rain drops, it is sucked in and you have only got scrub vegetation to show for it. That is what is happening at the present moment in this country.

The Corporation of Calcutta hands out to all the libraries

doles which, summed up, comes to quite a considerable sum. The government or the state are handing out monies for the development of various libraries or systems of libraries under their control. You add up these amounts—it comes to quite a respectable amount. But at the same time, you look at it professionally, dispassionately and you find out what is being done at the present moment as far as the expenditure is concerned and you find that the results that show from the expenditure are merely forty percent, in other words, you are getting not more than six annas out of every rupee that you are spending on library matters today in this country.

You take the training of librarians for example. Take the syllabus of our universities. You take everything that has to do with the library matters. You do find the lack of rationalisation, the lack of systematic approach, the lack of co-ordination, the setting up of various petty little egos militating against each other and jealous of each other's province. All these things have resulted in a certain amount of wastefulness which could be avoided. I would say that one of the priorities for us is to co-ordinate these resources. In a particular locality you find winking private subscription libraries galore dotted around the place like small pox on a man's face. Why don't you co-ordinate all these units? Let there be a sort of voluntary cohesion, let not merely the vanities of committee members be flattered so that every year they might get their annual reports printed, and their photographs printed in their annual report and hang a garland around the founder's photograph. Why not these people come together, here we are, six libraries within several hundred yards of each other, why shouldn't we pool our resources together and say let us get going in one rational useful library? Let us not say my great grandfather started this, sentiment demands that his name should continue and therefore in order to co-ordinate will mean assimilation of the reputation of this great forgotten man around whose photo you will never be able to hang garlands in later years. If this sort of attitude stops and the coordination in the urban areas takes place, I assure you that we will take a big, very useful step and compel government and public recognition as far as things are concerned.

The trouble with us today is this. So far we have never



run in this city a public library which really demands the recognition of the people. When once such a library is run, you will find the public will cotton on to it and then will find that whatever the government might be, however hardened the arteries of a government official or a minister might be—I am not saying that they are, but if they are—you will find they will make up to this particular situation. And remember, ministers and government officials are phenomenally responsive to public opinion and sentiment on any matter and your public library will be a thing that can be realised easily. It is this anarchy, this lack of co-ordination at the present moment, this lack of streamlining of our existing resources that has been responsible for quite a lot of confusion in these matters. And to take Phani's advice as far as adult education is concerned. High Priority. To co-ordinate our existing resources streamlining them. High Priority. The next priority goes to what Phani again suggested, the question of legislation for libraries. Unless there is an inevitable fund that accrues for the development of libraries, which is not at the mercy of a Minister or a Secretary you find that a public service can never be carried on with any utility or any particular effect. This inevitable source of money is absolutely essential.

It is very interesting to find, if you read the Library Advisory Committee's report that all the states south of the Vindhya are very anxious to have library legislation and the states north of the Vindhya are not very anxious to have library legislation. Now when you meet many of these people who are unwilling to have library legislation, what do they say? "Well, my dear fellow we have not even got enough money to keep our roads tidy and our drains going, to speak of free public libraries. And we agree with you, it is perfectly true, it is an ideal condition, but my dear fellow first things first." That is their argument. There is only one answer to that argument and this is to tell these people. "My dear friends, clogged drains are very dangerous it is true. But clogged minds are more explosive. A clogged drain might result in epidemic diseases, but a clogged mind will one day result in such an explosion as will shatter into smithereens the very structure of society." That is the only answer that

you can give these people. Therefore, it is very necessary that the northern states must be educated into a certain awareness of it and knowing full well the burdens they carry, knowing full well the difficulties that they face, even if they make a small beginning in some area or the other, even if all the funds we have go to the running of two or three public libraries, that would be something welcome, that would be something very happy.

## CHAPTER III

### BOOK MOBILE SERVICE

MODERATOR    MISS K. DIEHL (Dacca University)

I would like to mention first of all something about the functions which the bookmobile is to serve. As librarians we think of our collections, and remember when I talk about library I mean the things that are in it. I don't mean the building. Because actually, were there no rains, were there no dust and were there neither night nor day, just a comfortable place you know of, we would not need a building, we could simply put the books out. But the building is necessary to protect from weather and somewhat from the person who is not sure that he knows how to use the library.

This morning we are going to talk about the functions of the bookmobile, just as yesterday we talked about the functions of the library, that is, the collection that goes into the bookmobile. Before we can decide what sort of collection is to go into a piece of machinery which is carried around through the countryside from place to place, village to village, from city to small cities, perhaps even to private homes, we must know who our people are. What sort of population are we serving? How many people are we serving? What are the interests of persons who will be coming to our book collection? And I am going to limit it primarily to book collection. Even where bookmobiles have been functioning for a long time, most of what is carried on the van is book material. There is comparatively little pamphlet material or audio-visual material. But we will stick to books. If we are going to have a community where the educational standards have been relatively high, where we have a literacy level that is past 50%, then we will serve many people, at least we can serve many people. We may not because we advertise poorly. On the other hand, if we are in a community where the literacy level is lower, when it is down to 30% or perhaps below that, the potential of the immediate bookmobile service is very slight. The quantity of material that must be

carried will depend on the number of readers who are able to read, or who are able to listen. You know it is possible for one who reads to read aloud to others. And I venture to say that happens with adults, I know, it happened with children. But even so, if one person reads a book aloud to a group of five or six, or even to one other, it takes but one book. However, if five or six people actually read, six separate books are required. For that reason the size of the van or the size of the book box is determined by the potential reading public. Likewise, the size of the actual book collection, particularly the number of duplicate titles is determined by the population who are the potential users of the library today. I am not talking about next year or three years from now, I am talking about today.

When we get a bookmobile we are buying a piece of mechanical equipment. You have looked around at the mechanical equipment which is used in the city and you see that it has a way of wearing out. An automobile, with care, will last for eight or ten years very serviceably. But it is used principally by one driver for one kind of work. A bookmobile is somewhat a public piece and the driver of this year may not be the driver of next year and just like a fountain pen, the nib will wear badly for a writer if I start using his pen. The automobile is well known to one driver, the little quinks are now known to the others. So the piece of mechanical equipment that we buy will not last for ever and for that reason we do not need to buy the bookmobile nor furnish a bookmobile for the next 25 years. We do it somehow for a short time period. We do it for the potential of today, not for ten years from now.

There are several kinds of services that the bookmobile could offer. It can offer a deposit service where the parcels of books which go to a smaller library from the central library and are served there just as though they belong to the library that is actually distributing them. Then there is the service directly to the reader. I live way off from the centre, I am on the path of the bookmobile driver's route. The bookmobile stops at my house and two or three of my friends come and are served there by the bookmobile. Now with both kinds of services offered by the same machine, i.e., the same

automobile—in East Pakistan we only think of book boats rather than bookmobiles particularly six months of the year—the staff on that machine will differ, if it is going to be a deposit service from the staff if it is going to be direct service. All we need, if we are going to simply take packages of books from the central library to another library is a faithful driver. If we are going to offer direct service, if we are going to have groups of children and adults coming, if we are going to open the shelves of our bookmobiles, if we are going to have them arranged as a small library and open them to the public along the route, then we need somebody who knows books, and I do not say somebody who can charge books, I said somebody who knows books. In either case, we are offering extension service from our central library to the smaller communities about us.

Now the kind of service we offer is going to be dependent on several things. What kind of schools are there in the community? Simply primary schools? Does the education go through to Matric? Do we have colleges, technical schools, universities? If we just have the lower level schools we are likely to need far more of these simpler vocabulary books. If we have a composite school system in our community we are going to need all kinds of books and subsequently whatever goes out on the bookmobile will have to be far more complex than if it goes to a simple educational community where do our people live? Are we taking the van primarily to villages or are we taking the van to smaller urban centres around the central metropolis? You see, it would be quite different to furnish a bookmobile from the centre of Calcutta to the surrounding suburban areas than it would be to furnish a bookmobile with books from a small community and let that bookmobile go to villages around that smaller community. The content of the shelves will be very different. How old are the people we are serving? Perhaps an adult is just learning to read. He would not like to be taught the same vocabulary that a six year old will be taught. So the age balance of your community will determine the collection and the kind of service. You are not going to have a story hour for grandparents. You may have a reading circle but not a story hour.

What is the craft of occupation of the community you are serving? Are you going to a metal working village, are you going to an agricultural village, are you going to a textile, to a weaving village, are you going to a community where embroidery is the chief work? What is the work of the community that you are serving? If you are going to a village where agriculture is important, you are certainly not going to stock your van with a great deal of books on crafts relating to metal work and vice versa

Now I said we are going to think of a bookmobile service in terms of today. But shortsightedness can get us into as much trouble as longsightedness will get us. Remember, an automobile which is what we will probably use-sometimes I think that these three-wheeled vehicles will be fine, they carry about two or three maunds of books, and they can scoot on narrow roads and they would not take much petrol which will help. And they take just one driver. Two could not get on it. What are the needs today? What will be the possible needs within five years? When we are thinking of equipment and staff, we cannot think much further ahead three years or five years. The machinery will wear out. If the machinery and the service are satisfactory, the community will know it and I have a firm conviction that if the community is served happily by a small vehicle and that machine goes the way of all flesh, they would be only too happy, it may hurt but they will be only too happy, to replace it perhaps with two small ones, perhaps with a small one and a large one. But I firmly believe that if we offer a kind of book service, a kind of educational service, a kind of recreational and inspirational service from our bookmobile, the communities will respond. And in responding they will be awfully practical. When the machine wears out or when the machine gets a bad tyre, they will accede to buying a new tyre. They will accede to having the motor overhauled. They will even agree after six or seven years to replacing this vehicle with another one.

SHRI P. N. GOUR (Librarian, Sinha Library (State Central Library, Patna, Bihar) -

Unfortunately no bookmobile is attached to my library. In my state bookmobiles are attached to the district central

libraries. But still, being at the apex, I have some familiarity with the way the bookmobile services are being conducted in my state. The problems of book collection and selection for the bookmobile, the problem of service, variety of service, the mechanical difficulties and all that have been sufficiently touched upon by Miss Diehl. It is ample food for the morning not only quantitatively but in substance also. I do not think I can presume to improve upon them. What I shall do in brief is to tell you how bookmobiles are operating in my state.

Library extension service has been recognized as an integral part or function of our district central libraries. Now each district central library is provided with a bookmobile equipped with an audio visual unit also. We have 17 districts in Bihar, so there are 17 bookmobiles attached to these district central libraries. We have also a bookmobile attached to a particular area called Turki Vaishali area of the community projects for experimenting integrated educational scheme. Thus, there are 18 bookmobiles working in my state and there is provision in each of them to carry as many as two thousand books. Now the cost of the bookmobile vans and the initial stock was about thirty thousand rupees and the recurring annual cost for its maintenance is estimated at about seven thousand rupees for each district. Now besides the usual staff of a librarian, driver and cleaner, five cycle porters are attached to each van, who are posted at five different places on our route. Their work is to take small fixed collections of books from the book vans and distributed them among readers within the radius of five miles. Now you all know that for the remote corners, remote villages and other places in rural areas, not easily accessible by bookmobiles, some arrangements had to be made for rendering library service. These porters serve that purpose. Now as Miss Diehl has said, our bookmobile service consists of direct service to the readers and then indirect service through institutions, libraries and schools which are on motorable roads. They are our deposit stations and once in a month collections of books are inter-changed. Each van has about 100 deposit stations where it deposits books for circulation within the area of that institution and then

such service gives audio-visual education also because every bookmobile is equipped with audio-visual apparatus

A bookmobile being attached to the district central library, the jurisdiction of the service is the entire district and in order to cover the entire area, the service has to be carefully planned and a census of all kinds of roads, good roads, bad roads, metal roads, fair weather roads and all that is carried on and census statistics of all the villages, hamlets, educational institutions and libraries is also prepared before launching the service. Now one of the difficulties of Bihar is, it is a state of big districts. I suppose it is a common problem throughout the whole of the country. One of our greatest problems is the bigness of the country. Every problem assumes a magnitude which makes it difficult to be tackled. Naturally in Bihar also this problem of the bigness of the district creates difficulties in the way of organising proper bookmobile service in the entire state. In North Bihar the distance which each bookmobile has to cover is about 60 to 70 miles, whereas in South Bihar it is about 120 miles.

Now direct library service is rendered to the roadside villages which have no library or educational institution. Now the service point is generally the village panchayatghar or any convenient spot near the village where the mobile van goes and stops and readers either from the village, from the service points themselves or villages in the vicinity come to be served. Of course they know the timing of the arrival of the mobile van so they are ready. Service is rendered indirectly to those villages that have a library or educational institution. Treating these institutions as deposit stations, books and boxes are sent out to these stations once a month. An effort is made to cover all the development N E S blocks also by fixing up their offices or libraries as deposit stations.

The mobile service is not meant exclusively for rural areas. It operates in the towns also. In our towns the citizens do not always have a library nearby, in their own localities and here the mobile van moves about the town at regular intervals. The staff in the mobile unit and the district central libraries have to maintain the usual records, submit reports and returns regularly of the service they render. Now an effort is being made to establish a co-ordinated network of



library service in the rural areas through the agency of the district central libraries.

There are some difficulties which we are experiencing. First, we are not able to cope with the demand for books. It is true that there is not much literacy in the rural areas, but even those who are literate and want to read books cannot always be served by these mobile libraries because of the paucity of books. So, two thousand rupees is allotted every year to every bookmobile for purchasing books.

Another great difficulty is the propulsion cost, the cost per issue per book, which is inordinately high compared to normal library services. And this cost is accentuated on account of the propulsion cost. The buses have to cover long distances and they are rather heavy vehicles and unfortunately, we made them too heavy at the time of purchase without consideration of the propulsion cost. The propulsion cost of these vehicles makes the bookmobile service very expensive. Of course, there are difficulties in the initial operation of any service, particularly such new varieties of services, but these are, I think, the particular difficulties which we are experiencing in Bihar.

**SHRI TINCORI DUTTA** I would like to know the circulation that the bookmobile averages in the course of the year. The total number of volumes circulated and whether these are given free to all readers.

**SHRI K. C. THAKUR** As a librarian, it has been my experience that the actual circulation of books fluctuates from year to year and the variation in my district is ten to fifteen thousand per year.

**QUESTION** What is your population?

**SHRI K. C. THAKUR** In my district the population is about two lakhs.

**QUESTION** And the literacy percentage?

**SHRI K. C. THAKUR** About 40%. I mean in Ranchi city,

**QUESTION** Ranchi district literacy is below 6%, is it not?

**SHRI K. C. THAKUR** Yes, that is why I made it clear that I was talking about Ranchi City.

**SHRI B. S. KESAVAN** Are you giving your figures for the Ranchi district or for the city itself?

**SHRI K. C. THAKUR** So far as the circulation of books is concerned, I am giving the figure of the whole Ranchi

district Because, as far as the bookmobile is concerned, we have got only a few centres in the suburban areas Most of the centres are in rural centres

SHRI B S KESAVAN Do you mean to say that there are fifteen thousand borrowers for the entire Ranchi district, the population of which is two lakhs of people, i.e., only a small proportion of the population is served by the bookmobile?

SHRI K C THAKUR The problem before us is the lack of the reading habit in the community at present and we have to cultivate that habit The meagre data is due to that fact

SHRI B S KESAVAN Taking even the reading curiosity in the districts, does your bookmobile prove adequate to meet the existing reading curiosity that there is in the Ranchi district? Don't you think that this fifteen thousand, even taking all the limitations of reading curiosity, is rather a low figure?

SHRI K C THAKUR Yes, it is a low figure

SHRI D N SINHA I just want to get one thing clear, we must not go by the Ranchi example Ranchi is a problem district from the librarian's point of view It is an adivasi (tribals) district and it is only the city area that is populated by people whose language is Hindi In the rural areas, there are various languages and therefore, I do not know, this fifteen thousand, I presume the books must all be in Hindi?

SHRI K C THAKUR No, we have got Hindi books and besides a number of Bengali books also, because there are certain particular areas where more demand is for Bengali books

SHRI D N SINHA I know but that is also centred in the city and cannot include other areas Therefore if we could get the figures for some districts in Bihar, this will give us a better idea I don't think Ranchi gives us a really clear picture

SHRI GOSTHABEHARI CHATTERJEE (Secretary, Howrah District Library Association)

I believe Howrah was the first district in West Bengal to start bookmobile service

Our district is the smallest in West Bengal with an area of 615 square miles, there are two subdivisions, Howrah, with

175 square miles and Uluberia with 386 square miles. The percentage of rural population is 67.6 and we have 815 villages in our district. Of all the districts in West Bengal, Howrah is the least dependent on agriculture for the support of its population. It is practically a metropolitan district, a large proportion of its inhabitants obtaining employment in the adjoining city of Calcutta and the numerous industrial concerns along the Hooghly river. Even in the interior the villages tend to be semi-urban in character and the villagers contribute largely to the artisan class.

In 1955 we started our mobile service and we were provided with a bookmobile van. We purchased a new chassis, 131" wheelbase and 1½ ton in weight. We built the body according to our supervision with aluminium sheets. The capacity of the van is three thousand books inside and the height inside is 6'—6" and the width is 6 feet. There are also windows on both sides so that the books kept on the racks may be seen from the outside and also the people can enter inside and choose their books from the shelves inside the van. This van cost us seventeen thousand rupees, much below the government scheduled rate of Rs. 25,000/- including road tax and insurance. However, we started our bookmobile service with this van, but there are parts of Howrah which were inaccessible to automobiles, and for this reason we had organized bookmobile service through trains and local conveyance too. We covered the whole of Howrah District this way.

First, we started with seventeen service points and attached neighbouring libraries to one or the other of these service points. Programmes are made nearly one month ahead and sent to the libraries participating in the mobile service. The circulation figures for the whole district for one round is 3,133 books on various subjects with a circulation of 12,710 in the rural areas only, excluding two municipal areas, i.e., Howrah city and Bally. Usually, there are four rounds a year, and the mobile service takes six weeks for a round.

We cover 92 miles by train and 150 miles by van per one round of mobile service. The 150 libraries all over the district get books on loan from us and distribute them free.

to the readers in the area. These libraries are member libraries of the District Library Association

DR. NIHAR RANJAN ROY I have a comment Again we are choosing a district which is not a typical district It is just the opposite of the antithesis of Ranchi. It is a semi-urbanised district and I believe 80% of the population live on the earnings from the city It is the least agricultural district in West Bengal and being also an urban area half of Howrah is covered with factories Some of these factories have their own libraries Then the railways have two libraries Therefore, many of these areas are already covered by these libraries In a sprawling district like Midnapore if you have to reach even a village library you may have to travel for twelve miles or even more I do not know how it can be done in Midnapore or Malda where roads are so bad Therefore if we could have some other figures for some other district in West Bengal we could get an average

MISS K. DIEHL I am going to ask Mr. Kesavan to tie us together.

SHRI B. S. KESAVAN We have been asking the people of Ranchi district and Howrah district to give a picture of what is taking place There is only one difference of opinion I have with my friend Nihar Please do not forget that a bookmobile, by concept, is not necessarily meant for rural areas. I mean a bookmobile by concept, is as usable, as necessary, and as workable in an urban area as it is in a rural area The problems in a rural area are, as he very rightly says of transportation, of communication Roads are very difficult and therefore, the picture is bound to be a little different from that point of view The statistics that are given here are not statistics that we really can go by I will tell you why Book distribution is part of the bookmobile service It is not entirely a bookmobile service Miss Diehl made a very significant remark which sounded very obvious but which if you really ponder over is very profound She very rightly said that the building or the particular mobile is the least part of it The contents are more important Now most of us in this country after having seen what has been going on in America and England have reacted to it in one way, i.e., people in inaccessible places, a mobile van, books to be given

to them. You have got a bookmobile. In other words, most of our thinking on bookmobiles has been on the lines of distribution of a cache of books to quite a number of people. I am not saying that it is unimportant. But I am saying that it is not the most important feature of the bookmobile. Let me tell you what really happened before the bookmobile service is started in any of the countries where a bookmobile has been an established institution.

A very thorough survey is first made of the area where the bookmobile has to be located. This survey takes into account the categories of people inhabiting the area with particular reference to their professions and also with a complete knowledge obtained as to the several degrees of education or non-education that prevails in that area. Afterwards a survey is made of the existing resources in the area, of school libraries, public libraries, private libraries, institutional libraries, and a stock is taken of what is available. Now after all this basis has been prepared, a small board of two or three people meets. And then they decide that the bookmobile should see that all these present resources in that area are fully and completely utilized. Therefore a co-operation with all these institutions is indicated. All these institutions are requested to co-operate with this bookmobile service, because, please remember, however benevolent your intention, however rich you might be, you can never in any country in the world ever have a cache of books which will, in its plenary quality, provide for any and every category of people residing within that particular area. A bookmobile is an entirely co-operative enterprise run by a single organization with a cache of books which is made available to it and that cache is got together by a book selection process which is really very thoughtful.

The selection of books for the bookmobile depends upon the possible curiosity in that particular area. For this, a lot of work has to be done preliminarily. Questionnaires have to be sent, people in the locality have to be interviewed. The local librarian and the local workers have to be consulted, and on the basis of it the book selection is made. And usually for a bookmobile service to pay, you do not just have a building from which issues one solitary bookmobile and it

comes back. Usually you find a central organization with its processing, with its book selection, with its brains concentrated in that particular building, with its tentacles spread out to all these several quarters, with more than one bookmobile operating in the area. It is considered highly uneconomical, for example, to have one bookmobile in an area like Malda or Midnapore because the freshness of the service, the turnover of the books, the actual follow up work that is essential for a bookmobile to be alive will be absent. Please remember a bookmobile is not a bread van which drops food at people's doorsteps for daily consumption and then forgets about it until the next load of bread comes along. This is something entirely different which keeps contact with men's minds, with men's reading habits. An analysis is made and afterwards conferences are held in various parts of the area with the consultation of the local inhabitants and local teachers, educationists and other people, the man controlling the bookmobile organization obtains a constant education. Please remember also a bookmobile organization is not an ad hoc creation in vacuum. It usually stems from the headquarters of a highly developed public library organization, or as they call it in England a country library organization. Unless a bookmobile has got a reserve to feed upon constantly, unless this reserve is kept upto date by a process of book selection and thinking with reference to the reading needs of the public, your bookmobile service degenerates into a bus service without any educational implications. You get statistics, you get figures you can read it out in your annual report, you can report per issue it costs so much, per issue it did not cost so much, but frankly if you want to measure the quality of the service these figures are not reliable indications of the service. How are the schools involved in it? How are the libraries involved in it? How are the voluntary organizations functioning in the districts involved in it? What is the co-operation that these people are giving to the bookmobile service? These are highly important things.

And another thing, please do not think that a bookmobile is as mobile as people imagine it to be. A bookmobile is a thing that travels from one place to another but then it has this great ability to grow roots temporarily in a particular

area where if finds that the curiosity is such that it acts for the time being as a stationery library for the people in that locality. Now this method of growing roots on the way is not a hit and run visit of the bookmobile, it is not as if the cycle porters are all standing over there and the van comes over there, then you get a box of books, bye bye, and the van goes along. Because what happens in this particular case, you do not prepare the mental fabric that is necessary and goes with the bookmobile organization. The thought process of it is very important. Therefore, it has always been my feeling that whenever bookmobiles have been started in many of these places, the mental preparation is not there and the follow up is also not there. It has become automatic, it has become somewhat mechanical.

If you go to any area which operates a bookmobile and you ask the people who are operating this bookmobile these few questions. Now will you please tell me what are the categories of reading, what the categories of people who read are, what is the increase in the reading habit in this area, what are the suggestions that have come from the locality, what books have been added as a result of the suggestions, what rates have been concentrated upon, what background material has been provided for these people who are engaged in a particular occupation? All these questions that have to be asked, and please remember, it is a painful systematic, very step-by-step method by which a bookmobile can be built up as an abiding service in any area. Therefore, it will be another five or ten years in my opinion before we are in a position to arrive at these statistics properly and interpret them as far as our country is concerned. A basic analysis on which you have to build up your service is essential. If a working group get together and works at the bookmobile service for a period of three months, prepares a study paper on this particular thing and brings out the results we have some tangible facts to go upon instead of having to depend upon possibilities and approximations.

For example, the most tragic thing about the Bihar bookmobile library service is the tremendous build-up of the bookmobiles themselves. These really are houses on wheels. Petrol consumption, the lumbering way in which they go along

and the fairweather quality of this entire bookmobile, instead of trying to promote the flexibility of this particular service, forces the organizers, because of the amount of money that has been spent upon it, to degenerate the bookmobile service into a sort of a supply route along a particular line with feeders here and there on the way. This is only part of a bookmobile service and not the entire thing. Remember, the word bookmobile should never be only interpreted, especially in India, in terms of motor cars. Dr Roy very rightly pointed out the unfortunate quality of our roads—and there is no use quarrelling with it, they are there and we have to make use of whatever roads we have.

A very fine example has been set up in Kerala. The country as you know, is shot through with backwaters. And you know the roads there are also very rudimentary in quality, but fair weather or foul weather, you find that there has been such a ramification of several types of vehicles employed in the distribution. Even there, let me tell you, the picture is not so pleasant as my friend Tincori thinks it is. He stayed there for three days and he has come away with enthusiasm. But even there the follow-up, the analysis, bookselection has not been done with the thoroughness and the planning that is necessary. But one thing, we are all grateful for what we have, we are not quarrelling with what we have. Atleast we have got the rudiments to start with but as professionals, it is obligatory on our part, by means of study papers, pilot projects as I have indicated and with the help of people like Gostha Behari Chatterjee, who is running a sort of a book mobile service to arrive at some basic data.

DR NIHAR RANJAN ROY. I could not agree more with the important points Mr Kesavan made and I am just here to emphasize underline them. We are talking in the air so far as bookmobile service is concerned. No survey has yet been made. We launched upon a scheme without having the statistics, detailed figures and any idea of the region that we are going to serve. One point I would make, not from the point of view of professional needs but as a social worker is this. You know perhaps that in the course of the third five year plan, we would be launching upon the greatest national scheme that India has ever had. Compulsory universal free



primary education. This will be, to begin with, concentrated in the rural areas.

For 150 years our towns and cities have sucked the villages dry. It is time that we paid a little more attention to our villages and personally—I am not making it a political issue, but personally—I would like to give a little more attention and thought to the rural areas than the urban areas. I do not say that library service in the urban areas are very satisfactory. They are not, I know. But after all, they have something. These rural areas have had nothing for centuries and I will again emphasize that the Bengal Library Association should at once take up the work of making a survey. But when we do, we should underline the case of rural areas more than the urban areas.

SHRI RAM GOSWAMI (Librarian, State Central Library, Shillong, Assam)

Library movement in Assam, to be frank, is still in its infancy and only in the last part of the first five year plan we have organized library services in Assam. Under this scheme for the improvement of libraries sponsored by the Government of India, our state has participated. We have one state central library in the capital in Shillong and seven district libraries organized so far in the plain districts. We all know that Assam is a state of calamities. One calamity follows another. We have floods, we have earthquakes. So in organizing the library service in Assam, we have to face so many problems.

Building was a problem in our state, but recently the Government of India sanctioned nearly 34 lakhs of rupees for construction of district libraries as well as the State Central Library. Now we have a spacious library building in Shillong, and five district libraries at Jorhat, Tezpur, Silchar, Nowgong and Gauhati are being completed and we have occupied the State Central Library building last year.

In our State Central Library we have about 19,000 books. Language being a problem in India, we have to get books in all languages. In Assam we have three major languages—Assamese, the regional language, Bengali and Hindi. We have to give major consideration to these three languages while providing books for our readers.

**QUESTION** What do you do for the Khasias?

**SHRI RAM GOSWAMI** Khasias have very little publications of their own, but generally they read English and can be served by the English books we have

In our district libraries we have a collection of ten thousand approximately, consisting of all the languages and including all the important subjects and we try to represent the subjects of particular interest to the locality

We have not so far been able to organize the bookmobile service in the true sense. Under this scheme of library service we purchased three bookmobiles. You may call them delivery vans or exhibition vans. We could not organize a bibliovan at the moment because we have not yet been able to organize our district libraries. But the bookmobile has been utilized to deliver books to our deposit centres. Under the State Central Library we have seven district libraries and under the district libraries we have seventy deposit centres. Deposit centres are being organized in institutional libraries. They may be school libraries, public institutions or public libraries run by subscription. Our library van can carry two thousand volumes at a time. And the books are selected in the district libraries by a committee. And all the library vans are operated under the orders of the Inspector of Schools, not by the Librarian. The Inspector of Schools controls the expenditure of the library van and the expenditure on the pay and establishment. The function of the State Central Librarian is to find out the centres where the books are to be distributed. So, as a matter of fact, we have not yet organized the bibliovan service in our libraries. I cannot say anything about library van activities in our libraries, but we hope that this bookmobile service will be taken up very shortly with the expansion of the other library services in Assam. We expect that more district libraries, especially in the hill areas, will be organized in the third five year plan for which provision has already been made.

**SHRI B. B. MOHANTY** We in Orissa have not been able to organize the bookmobile service as it has been organized in Bengal or Bihar today. But we do have a parallel service existing in the block area. In the development blocks, at the block level,

there is a block information centre. In each block there are about ten to twelve Gramsevak or village level workers. Each Gramsevak serves one panchayat. In the monthly meeting at the block level, all the gramsevak assemble, discuss common problems and assess the people's needs as far as books are concerned.

In the adult literacy centre, there are some difficulties about the follow up literature because in many villages there are no libraries. These Gramsevak have therefore been provided with steel trunks and every month when they come to the block level extension officers' meeting, they bring their steel trunks with them and collect some thirty or forty books and carry these to the villagers. And during the month when they go to the villages they distribute these books. The next month they bring back these books and take a fresh stock. I do not call this a mobile service, because block information centres do not have mobile vans.

Of course, the audio-visual unit is separate and we in Orissa are stressing the use of non-projected visual aids to a greater extent than projected visual aids.

In Orissa only about 500 books are published a year and that is the chief difficulty we have regarding new books. So, it often happens that after a year, the gramsevak takes to the villages the same books he had taken a year ago because the number of books is very limited.

**SHRI B. S. KESAVAN** One statement that Mr. Goswami made is very significant. I am not being carping but he said the bookmobile van is being operated under the orders of the Inspector of Schools. A very clumsy phrase, a very unfortunate state of affairs, because no bookmobile can ever be operated under anybody's orders. That is one thing.

You find that it is an arterial service where the blood flow will have to be regulated according to the particular health of the community. The arterial blood and the venous blood that flows through this circulation of the bookmobile is governed entirely by the capillaries of this system, who are the actual workers stationed in these various points and who really determine what the book stock is, what the compulsion of this particular service is.

One of the most tragic things among us today is that

almost all of these bookmobiles and most of these things have fallen into the hands of very well-intentioned educational people. It is rather unfortunate but it is true. These people are really nice people, they mean well, they want to help. But they have been so disciplined in the terms of formal education, they never have that point of view, that eagerness, that enthusiasm, that sense of dedication for this particular service which is entirely different.

The DPI is a good man, completely involved in files. The deputy DPI is an equally good person, but the poor man hasn't got the time to say boo to a goose as they say. He has got so much of work to do that he cannot possibly do this job. The sooner the mobile services and other things are weaned away from these formal agents of education the better. Mind you, their co-operation, their goodwill and their sympathy are necessary. But in addition to the goodwill, sympathy and co-operation, there must be people who have grassroots, who will have the running of this particular bookmobile service.

DR NIHAR RANJAN ROY. There is a point which I bring to the notice of those in charge of the Library Association. I raised this point three years ago in one of the annual meetings of the Bengal Library Association and the directorate of education felt a little cross about it.

The whole scheme of library extension in the second five year plan has no independent existence of its own. It comes under the head of social education and naturally, when it goes to the state, it becomes another wing of the education directorate. Now the argument is with the Planning Commission itself. The Planning Commission and the Government of India together have to recognize that library service must have independent recognition of its own and must not be lumped together with social education. I have myself since I have once been a librarian, been arguing the case with the Planning Commission and also in parliament. But it is for the Indian Library Association and the state library associations to make themselves heard, to raise cries and slogans. They must raise it now, when the third plan is being discussed. And if all the library associations

present the case, before the Planning Commission and the Government of India, it is bound to be heard.

MISS K. DIEHL. Again the problem seems to be the same around the world. And the people who want something badly are going to have to make themselves heard. If the librarians want an independent programme, then the librarians must shout. Educators will shout. Education seems to be one of those things that must eventually touch everybody. It must. Library is voluntary and the library is for the people who have ideals, who want the heart to grow. So the librarians are going to have to get on the bandwagon and shout.

SHRI BIJAYANATH MUKHERJEE (Bengal Library Association)

I fully agree with Dr. Roy and Mr. Kesavan regarding the need of community survey for the success of any bookmobile service with the name. But just at the present moment, there are other projects that can be started even without that community survey. I perfectly understand that this service can surely never be done without it. But because of the want of other means of communication we have to make use of the vehicles we have at our command.

Now what I mean to say is this. It may sound difficult to have the entire resources of one locality under one body in order to make use of the entire resources of a particular locality. But I do not believe that it is really difficult. Because since all the libraries of a particular locality are becoming members of a district library association, it is quite possible to pool their resources and have a co-operative basis for a bookmobile service. Although we do not have the county library system as in England, still by mutual co-operation and help we can build up a good stock in order to supplement each other.

One point has not been discussed and that is the role of the bookmobile services in library extension work. Nowadays, bookmobile service are considered to be a type of extension service everywhere. And it must be understood at the same time that it is not only an extension service, but it is a necessary library service for an area where the population is sparse. It must not be considered that it is merely an external service. It is a necessary service of the library for the people who can never have a stationary library service.

In our country there is need for teaching people to use the library and there is great want of personnel to give this education. Now generally bookmobiles are run by such institutions which have with them people who can give this training to the rural population. So if such men are sent with the mobile vans and if arrangements are made for educating the people in using books and for creating more interest in the reading of books, I think significant service can be done with bookmobiles even before we can have finished the community surveys.

**SHRI SUBODH MUKHERJEE** - The bookmobile service that is carried on in the United Kingdom is developed to a high degree and we have not yet attained to that standard. We should not, of course, blindly follow the system that obtains there. I wish to point out to the people who are in charge of bookmobile service here the cheapness with which they operate the service. In many of the county library service I found they had a room or library on wheels attached to the mechanical portion or the motor. This mechanical portion or the motor drags the room on wheels and leaves it at a spot, say in a village, and then this mechanical horse as it is called, goes back to pull another van to some other place. In this way one mechanical unit can work several library vans and that I think is very economical, because if you have a bookmobile solidly attached to the mechanical portion, it cannot move and has to stay for four hours at one spot, whereas this detachable mechanical horse can work four and five units at a time. This is just a hint to our people who are in charge of the mobile service.

As a point of information I will comment on gentlemen in this country who are non-librarians and in charge of library services. The Bengal Library Association at its Nabadwip session under the chairmanship of Dr Ranganathan, moved a resolution that at least the library directorate should be under a technically qualified librarian and non-librarians should nowhere be in charge of library services. I think all other state library associations should follow up as indicated by Dr Roy in his talk with the Planning Commission. And the Indian Library Association should also take up the cudgel.

**MISS K. DIEHL** - Extension is a basic part of library service if our libraries are tax supported. If they are paid for by the peo-

ple the people deserve the service. And the people who are not served have the right to do a little bit of rebelling. So whether it be extension, whether it be a service to which they are entitled, whether it be by a tremendous van, whether it be by small vehicles, whether it be pedalled or whether it be carried, need not matter if everybody who is within our particular territory—and I mean geographical territory—does have an opportunity to use materials which have been provided by his or her library.

## CHAPTER IV

### LIBRARY SERVICE IN SCHOOL

**MODERATOR :** MISS KATHERINE DIEHL

I suppose we may call schools just those institutions that serve little people, children upto approximately adolescence. But I am not sure that we should limit ourselves to that I think rather we should consider schools and school library service as a kind of service that the libraries give the people who are concertedly learning And that, of course, means some of us of my very hoary age and a bit older, and of course, lots of people who are far younger than I

In school libraries and I mean libraries of all kinds of learning institutions, there is always the young person who will haunt the bookshelves, and quite unfortunately, there is also the person who never even catches a glimpse of them I don't know which ones the librarian should specialize in Perhaps we should not specialize Our favourites, of course, are those who haunt the bookshelves These are the ones whose reading interest we get to know very intimately If they are little people we know that they are interested in a certain kind of story Or they are interested in a certain kind of natural life, or a certain language, or a certain kind of writing, literally speaking If they are adolescents then we know their blossoming interests and we realize that some of them are hunting for things which they hope they can do for several hours each for the rest of their lives In other words, the adolescent is becoming vocationally conscious and he is hunting for his niche in life He may not find it, or he may find it and not be able to exercise it But at least he is hunting for something to enlarge his vision Or our favourite reader, the one who haunts the bookshelves, may be a college or university student who has great problems academically That is, he is always involved in making some kind of research study that the library does not have represented on its shelves Or he is hunting among the community for statistics, or he is making that survey of his community which Mr Kesavan spoke of earlier this morning Perhaps it is the young college or university student who is interested in some language other than his mother tongue and the librarian is hard-pressed to find examples of writing in that language which are in his im-



mediate compass, where the vocabulary is a maturing vocabulary, but where the interest level is of value to the college age or the university age individual. Or perhaps our reader who haunts the library is the teacher, kindergarten or elementary, first year in college or university, technical school or graduate study at the university level. Now that is a sort of captive audience that the school library serves. They are not all captured, but it is a captive audience. It is a limited audience that the school or other institutional library serves because it comprises people of certain age, of a certain subject interest or living within a certain area.

The library, however, must serve all of those people and for just a moment think of the none-too-favourite reader, the one whom you don't get to know, the young person, child, youth or young-adult who never comes to the library. How to reach him? Well, your guess is as good as mine. I think most of us try to reach that person who has not been reached with news announcements in our school papers, with announcements on bulletin board, and some of us do great obeisance to lists of new accessions, some of us try exhibits, some of us try hobby exhibits, and some of us try "discover" exhibits. But actually for that person who is not captured by that library, that non-captured captive within the school, the crux of the problem is the teacher. It is not the student, it is the teacher. If the teacher is a non-reader, would some of the 35 or 50 or 200 people be with whom that teacher makes contact?

Now thank God that all of us, in growing up, are touched by numbers of teachers, so perhaps the teacher who is the non-reader is somebody who works with his or her hands. As librarians, this is our opportunity. Find the books for that craft-interested instructor, the books that will encourage that instructor in crafts. You may tease that non-reader and the non-reading public in his or her classroom. You may tease that person to find other books than craft books. Of course, scientists do not have as many books. They have their laboratory and I will always admit that the laboratory for the scientist is approximately the same as the library for the humanist. So I will not fuss too much. But there are some books that can enlarge the vision of the scientist and it is up to the librarian who knows about the various tables, who knows

about the various formulae in mathematics and chemistry and physics and so on to lead the instructor to those books just casually, and very casually encourage the instructor, who in turn will pass the enthusiasm on to the students. I say that it is the instructor in our captive school audience that is going to make the difference between a reading school and a non-reading school.

Now I am holding here a little bit of bait, a certificate. They are hardly satisfactory for college. But the idea is satisfactory for college. No college or university student is going to be interested in receiving a little certificate like this. But every college or university student is interested in being singled out as a good reader. He is interested in an award though the award may simply be a word of praise. The award for the college or university student might, instead of this sort of certificate, be a small book. It might be a membership, insignificant in rupees, but very significant in encouragement. Now for the younger person, the person aged anywhere up to thirteen or even fourteen—I doubt if it can carry much further—this sort of award is satisfactory.

Again let us weld the materials that are in the community—and by community I am thinking primarily of schools, but again all the resources of the community are as useful for school purposes as the school library is useful for community purposes, and let us use them all of us. Now what do we do with this award? Well, we will watch the child. We do not make tremendous statistical studies. But you know, one day the youngster comes and wants another book. Tell me what was in the first one and you will give me the whole story. Three days later he comes again for another book and after a while that young person will have read everything on the shelves. And not only will he have read everything himself, but he will have shared it with the folks around him. Now that same enthusiasm carried through the college and university years.

I remember my first year as librarian. I had a young woman as a library assistant and I had noticed that she was always taking books back to her room with her and reading. And one day I jokingly said to her, "Well, how many books have you read so far?" "Oh, about forty." I said, "That,

and you are working 18 hours a week in the library and you are having 18 or 20 hours a week of study, and you are doing your own laundry, and you are just having a generally good time" She said, "yes". I said, "When do you do it?" "Oh," she said, "I don't turn off the lights quite as early as I should" Well by the end of the year that little miss had read approximately 105 books on various subjects Of course, being a young woman, a large number of those volumes were fiction, a large number biography There were a few history, a few on science So it was a good general collection That same year, in that same college, her competitor read just a few less than the 105 books. So you see the enthusiasm had carried over and the competitor was also a library assistant Now you might get a clue from that People who work in libraries are going to know the collection to want to read the things that are on the library shelves So the more people in your institutional library, the more people will become enthusiastic The more you can draw in to help—may be it is just straightening the books on the shelves or putting the books back or arranging the slips or charging books—that is all teaching and sharing in a community responsibility and everyone of those young people, be they little children—and little children six and seven can help, don't worry, they can put the little chairs back, they can bring the books to the proper place; do not wait until they are adolescents to teach them to pick up after themselves—but any age, if you can get them enthusiastic about your business, they will become library conscious It may pass over during a certain period of their life, but then will come back to it We all have specialties, we all have special times in life when somethings are terribly important And these important things are not always books, sometimes they are far from books But we come back to these After all, as librarians our objective is enrichment of life

Now there is another side for the school or college or university librarian—the side of assisting the curriculum There is something that as university people, as librarians, we must take cognizance of, whether we be in public libraries, state libraries, school or university libraries What goes on in the universities is very important to librarians What goes on in the universities is extremely important for the teachers of

India or of anywhere, because, the way teaching progresses at the university level is the way teaching will progress from there on down. You do not begin your shift in the way of teaching at the kindergarten. The shift begins up there with an enthusiastic teacher, with an enthusiastic librarian, with an enthusiastic administration. So we are going to have to shout our little piece when it is time to shout. And please do not wait too late.

Now the library where you have a syllabus, stated examination, where you have a round learning is not going to assist the classroom content very much, unless it assists an individual teacher here and there. Or perhaps unless it assists the department. What is going to happen? I do not say we are going to just grab and snatch. We are going to have to watch, see what they do and be enthusiastic for the free access to books by the university student for his educational programme. I do not agree with the absolutely free choice of subject matter which takes place in some universities in some parts of the world. There is no system. On the other hand, there are parts of world, where the student has absolutely no choice, and if there can be that golden mean—it is hard to ever get in life—it is in the hands of the libraries. For the academic programme, for the school programme, from any grade on up through the doctoral degree, if that academic programme is absolutely stated, then it is the librarian, the library staff, the books on the library shelves, that are going to enrich the life of the captive audience within the university, college, technical school, high school or elementary school and even on down. The enrichment will come through the library to the teacher and will be a plus, will be a little bit of extra, which the teacher will give in addition to the questions in the stated examinations. And actually, there is plenty of time in life to get some of these extra things, if we are interested enough to use it. If we just sit, as vegetation, we are not getting much enthusiasm. If that quiet time which is really just a vegetation time can be a time for building a little bit of enthusiasm, it is the school, college or university librarian who can encourage the enrichment for that young person who has that time.

There are also two other sets of papers which may be distributed at this time. Now these sets of papers are of

particular interest to the folks teaching young people upto the matric stage. However, they are applicable beyond, perhaps in other terms. Now, please, as you read these remember to apply these to the age group in which you are interested. It may say children, but that is alright, it is good to remain a child for a long long time. As you go through these papers you will discover that as a librarian you actually have a very very friendly helper if you can find that helper. As school or college librarian, it is certainly not upto you or to me to make all the book choices. In fact, very few real choices should be made by you or me as college, university or school librarian. We may be experts in the field, but somehow, I am a little scared of experts. Because, as an expert I am simply there as a visitor and they can simply take me or leave me. And I have been in groups where there have been experts as visitors and frequently we have left them.

Now the teacher who has the little audience at the fingertips during the class period or the school day and who can be a part of the informal library staff is going to feel a very personal responsibility towards that library. If that teacher makes several book selections and the librarian purchases these books, the teacher will say "I suggested those books and I want my friends, children and students to read them. They are particularly good." Now in the schools, if the majority of the teachers or professors are part of your informal library staff, they make book selections, come to the library, read the periodicals, read some of the library books and suggest new ones, bring students and point to a particular book for a particular student, then the school library at any level will begin to seep down to the student who is after all our only reason for being at the school. Heaven help us when the school is made for the teachers. As long as the school is serving the young people of any age, it is doing its business. But when the library serves the librarian and the school serves the teacher, then something is badly out of proportion.

Now looking over these sheets, the longer one "A dozen library do's for the teachers", if fixed to any age group in which you are interested, a little of it will work even though

everything may not be applicable. On the other pair of sheets "The Librarian and the Teacher working together", there is a list of teacher responsibilities. Plenty of times, as librarian, you and I must be teachers. Fact is, I don't know most of the time which I am. I like to be a librarian, I like to teach. I love to see a library become a sort of organized something that serves a group of people. At the same time, I love to get into the class room and to encourage a group of young people with a certain idea. So I don't know which I am. Some of us spend more of our time with processing and some with the public. But all of us have that strange mixture.

Now, actually we, as school people are responsible to everybody within our tax district. We are responsible to everybody who has paid his fees and is part of the academic family. We are responsible to all of them just as with the bookmobile and the public library, the service is due everybody within the library district, no matter the size of the district. So, with the school or college or university library, everybody within that compound who has paid his dues, who has paid his taxes is part of our responsibility. And we are a little bit derelict if there is a group here which spends all its time playing and none of its time reading, just as we are derelict if there is a group here which does nothing but read and never plays. For life is somehow a balance and as librarian, we can encourage both and we will have better readers if there is a little playing and better playing if there is a little reading. We will have better students if our people do both and do a lot of studying.

SHRI S C BERA (Headmaster, Vaishnavchak Maheshchandra Multi—Purpose School, Midnapur District)

Boys and girls of different aptitude come every day and there is no gainsaying the fact that uniform teaching imparted in classrooms cannot be suited to all the pupils of different merits. So, in order to supplement the class teaching, help from somewhere also becomes absolutely necessary and a library alone can offer that help. Besides, it is in the school library that the reading habit of pupils is formed. Here again they learn how to use the library. It is a matter of great regret that most of the educated people give up the habit of reading after they leave school or college. But they forget that a school or college only opens the door of the temple of learning to

us and after we are past the school of university stage, the real time for learning begins. The post-graduate stage in a man's life is the real time to acquire diversified knowledge and experience. As a result of this aversion to study and research in post-university stage, the number of specialists in our country will be on the decrease, which no doubt will cause great concern to all teachers of the country. To put a stop to this national loss, the reading habit in school libraries should be built up in schools and carried forward in university and post-university stages.

It is also a matter of regret that many of our pupils do not know how to use the library. Undesirable comments are recorded by the readers on the pages of the books, which not only speaks of bad taste, but creates a bad repercussion on subsequent readers' minds. The bad habit can also be removed if the young pupils are taught to use the library properly from the very beginning.

In the national life the importance and responsibility of a school library is as great as the school itself. But the question is, what amount of importance do we place on our school libraries? How wretched is the condition of the library? In most cases, the library is located in a portion of the office room or in a small adjacent room with little or no ventilation and the worst atmosphere for reading. There is no librarian, and a class teacher is entrusted with the charge of the library and he either after his day's work or during the leisure period, with fatigued body and mind, does the work of the librarian most reluctantly as a matter of course without any initiative, or skill. It can very well be understood what attraction such a library has for the pupils in general. What about the number of books? That is also a sad tale. Besides some juvenile literature, a few cheap editions and some dictionaries and syllabus books, nothing will be found in most of the libraries.

Today the world is advancing with the speed of Sputniks and scholars and leaders of thought have been presenting these news of advancement in charming and beautiful manner, but we elders are incapable of presenting those publications to our young boys and girls. Our libraries remain static. At present, most of our schools get aid from the government, some

amount is allotted every year for the library, but it is too inadequate for the purpose.

I state below what I have gathered from my personal experience. Great importance should be given to a school library. For this purpose a separate and self-contained block is required. Great care should also be taken in selecting the site for the block. The site should be such as to draw the attention of everybody. The block should have three rooms with a front verandah or with two side rooms to be used as a reading room for boys and the other for children of lower classes. The middle should preferably be two-storeyed and contain open almirahs to keep books. The almirahs will not be locked and it is desirable that every almirah should have pasted on it a paper showing the particulars of the books inside. The office of the librarian should be in a middle room. The doors and windows lying between the middle room and the reading rooms on either side should have glass panes. The seat of the librarian should be so arranged as to enable him to keep watch over all the readers, though the readers may not have a view of the librarian. In the front verandah there will remain various newspapers and magazines and a study circle will be formed, there. Great care should be taken in the selection of books and in this regard there is a marked difference between public libraries and school libraries. The main criterion in the selection of books in a public library is what the reader wants to read. Most people go there for recreation and only a few are in search of knowledge or for research. But in a school library only such books should find a place as should be read by the young pupils and not what they want to read. It is the joint responsibility of the teacher and the librarian to inculcate in the young pupil the habit and taste for really good books, books dealing with different subjects, viz., religion, fine arts, literature, economics, etc.

The management of the library should be in a democratic way. A representative body elected by the pupils should be formed and that body will frame the constitution and the rules and regulations of the library and the responsibility for the upkeep of the library and maintenance of order and discipline should be vested in that body. Of course, the teachers and the librarians will jointly assist them or give them guid-



ance in doing so by exerting moral influence over them. In the libraries, the young readers will choose their own books ; taken them out from the shelf and keep them in their proper places after completion of reading. Reading books in the library itself should be more encouraged than taking these books to their homes, because in many cases young pupils do not go through the books at home and simply return them on the due date. So, in order to create a reading habit in them, at least two periods in a week may be set apart for library, besides in the case of absence of any teacher, instead of sending a substitute teacher to a particular class, all the pupils of the class may be asked to avail themselves of the benefit of reading in the library. By such compulsion the habit will be formed and the day will not be far when the library attracts them at every moment of their leisure.

While teaching in the classrooms, the teacher knows how to create an urge in their minds to use the library by quoting quotations from famous books. Many may be doubtful about the success of the management of the library in a democratic way under the honour system in consideration of the fact that corruption and malpractices are so rampant in our society now-a-days. My personal experience has shown that such an apprehension is without any foundation. The fundamental democracy to grow a feeling of individual affinity towards all public and national properties, being entrusted with the rights and responsibilities of managing the affairs of the library themselves, the pupils feel the library with all the books, furniture, its bricks and mortar and everything as their own and will not allow it to be spoilt even by the scratch of a pencil. Gentlemen present here no doubt will feel interested and enthusiastic to learn that a certain school library managed under the honour system for the last five years has produced wonderful results and not a single book has been lost, not a single item of furniture damaged. Of course, introduction of the honour system and its ultimate success will depend upon radical and universal changes of all the fundamental laws prevailing in all spheres of school life.

MISS K. DIEHL. I am delighted to know that the honour system is coming into some other school libraries. How long have you been working on this plan?

**SHRI S C BERA** Five years.

**MISS K. DIEHL** For five years Have the teachers been glad to do it this way, or have you had to do all the planning and the enthusiasming yourself?

**SHRI S C BERA** All the teachers try their best to guide the students There is also the librarian There are five hundred students in the school including the primary section

**MISS K DIEHL** Five hundred students and all the teachers are enthusiastic about it You see, that is a clue A little sentence was mentioned by our speaker about school library being so much different from the public library Now in a sense I will agree, in this sense only that one is a captive audience and the other is the total audience

**SHRI JAGABANDHU SETH** (Pahalampur Junior High School)

I have been in school service for the last 12 years and in every place I have accepted library work because I thought I shall be able to serve the students better as a librarian than as a teacher The points I wish to discuss will probably be helpful in solving some of the problems which we are confronted with

I have worked with various types of schools, residential, semi-residential and day schools In residential schools where the students stay for all the 24 hours, facilities for library services are better But problems arise when we start feeling an inferiority complex Let me give an example of a school

This had fifty students in a hostel and also day scholars This new school having no dearth of funds sincerely wished and still wishes to give the best educational facilities to the students To enable the teachers to give of their best, they have sanctioned three thousand rupees per month for salaries However, when it came to the question of the library, even though they provided a thousand books the first year, for subsequent years they ruled that only Rs 200 worth of books could be purchased They asked me to make a list of suggested titles Being in Calcutta then, I contacted various publishers and on consultation with the book reviews available, I selected 300 best books of the year. However, when I submitted the list to the school I was told that these titles were meant for the M.A. or B.A (Hons) students, Though I maintained that some of these books were necessary

to the teachers for reference purposes they wanted only books that the students could read. And also a few of the teachers were then appearing for post-graduate examinations and the school authorities thought that the graduate level books had been suggested for their exclusive use. The final outcome was that books worth fifty rupees only were purchased and even these were not particularly suitable for a school library and were mostly cheap editions. What is the reason for this? Someone has said that every king should be a philosopher. In my opinion every school secretary and every headmaster should have some knowledge about libraries. If that had been the case, mine and similar efforts would not have been fruitless.

My present job is in a village. There literacy is low, there are only 150 books in the library and on the orders of the previous headmaster books were not issued to the children.

I once visited a hundred year old school in Calcutta to observe the functioning of their library. They had lots of books on the shelves but they were never used. The staff there were surprised when I enquired about the circulation of books. I was given to understand that the books have been static for many years and only the few magazines that were received were used at all. Of course, I do not mean to say that this is the condition of all the school libraries in Calcutta. However, if this was the condition in a city library you can well imagine what happens in a village.

Considering that the village teacher has to work 38 periods out of the total 39 per week, has to prepare his lessons, and take on private tuitions as an economic necessity, there is very little time left for him to take an interest in helping the students through the library. It is not fair to say that the library is there and is not being used when the students and the teachers are not given the opportunity or the incentive to use it.

Students always respond to encouragement. In my present school I have thrown open the library shelves to the students and they have utilized the few books available to the fullest extent possible. The excellent response has drawn favourable comment from the Inspector of Schools. However,

it is not possible for one person to continue to sacrifice his time and energy for an unlimited period of time. If there is anyone here from the Education Department, I would request him to see that the teachers are given more free time.

We need funds and time and more space. There should be at least a room to house the books and a reading room for the students to come and read.

The authorities talk about sacrifice and honorary service without seeming to understand that there is a limit to that also. Sometimes teachers are offered say, Rs 15 more per month for doing the library work also. However, even though they are offered Rs 100 extra, how is it possible to do the library work when from the very beginning, with the best of will, there is no time to do it.

I will conclude by saying that the librarian, as in any other profession, has to be given more free time to plan and assess how best to do his work, in his case how best he can help the students through the library.

**SHRI D N SINHA** I am concerned primarily with secondary schools. In Bihar we have about 1500 secondary schools, of which about 1200 are fully recognized. Whatever high schools we now recognise will be higher secondary schools.

As for the libraries of these schools, I must confess that their condition is not quite satisfactory. As has already been pointed out, the libraries in high schools are housed very badly, have a very small number of books and even the available books are not being adequately utilised. And the main reason is, as you know, that among teachers themselves the reading habit has gone down almost beyond redemption. Something very drastic seems to be called for in order to create reading habits among the teachers themselves. Because, as was pointed out by Miss Diehl, a non-reading teacher is bound to create a generation of students who will naturally be non-readers. The one way in which a teacher creates reading habits in his boys is by reading himself and talking about books he has read casually or directly. Perhaps talking directly does not pay much. Instructing directly is not very useful. But the teacher may talk in an interesting way about a book he has read and that may create in the students a desire to read. I have found this from my own experience.

I was a headmaster of a high school for many years and I found in the library of the school an old book which had been lying unused for many years. I read it, spoke highly of its qualities and I found that the book was in demand after that.

In the State of Bihar we do not recognize a high school unless it has at least 1000 books. For higher secondary schools we are going to have a more stringent condition.

The state government of Bihar has been helping school libraries in several ways. Coupons are issued not only to public libraries, but also to schools, particularly high schools, but the amount granted is very small. Out of 1200 fully recognized high schools, about 600 were recognized before 31st March 1949. To all these schools we give subsidy through the Board of Secondary Education for purchase of books. This subsidy is not very much, it works out at about ten rupees per month per school, or Rs 120 for each school per year. But that allotment is restricted to pre-1949 schools. To others we are not giving anything at all, because we have no funds. To some of the other schools we give lump sum grants, which is a type of omnibus grant for many purposes which may also be utilised for the purchase of books. But those grants are not called library grants and there is no specific mention of the portion of that grant which will be earmarked for the purchase of books in the higher secondary schools. We have given about Rs 2500/- to quite a large number of schools which have been upgraded so far, or which are likely to be upgraded into a higher secondary school or multi-purpose school. But that is generally so in case of government schools. To non-government schools we give library grants on a 50/50 basis. To almost all these higher secondary schools we have already given a grant of Rs 1,500/- on the understanding that they will allot another Rs 1,500/- out of their own resources. I believe that the higher secondary schools have better libraries, generally speaking, than many of the high schools. But even so I cannot claim that the libraries of the higher secondary schools or multi-purpose schools are what they should be. The condition which wants to create for the ideal library is absent. The collections are lopsided, that is to say the varieties covered are not quite many.

There is a habit among many people to start schools for certain purposes which we don't encourage. They fill in the stock of the library with all sorts of books which may not be useful to students and teachers. We do not actually name the books, which they ought to have, but we name the categories. For example, there should be books for the young, particularly, but there should also be some books on the methods of teaching, on education in general, on scientific subjects and so on, and the new purchases that are being made are generally on the lines of the instructions we are issuing, but still even now there is a tendency to satisfy our requirements somehow or other.

We have been making all efforts to improve school libraries. In the current year we have not been able to make a big allotment to the secondary schools. We have granted only a sum of Rs 50,000/-, but during the days that are still left in the current year I am trying to get another Rs 50,000 for the schools. I hope I will succeed. As for the primary stage, there is hardly a library worth the name in most of the rural primary schools. But they have some books which are being supplied to them by the District Superintendent of Education. Technically, they are still under the district boards and the municipal boards, but the actual control of these schools has been taken over by the state through its officers, who are the disbursing authority to control the finance. One good result has been that the teachers are now getting their salaries in time and schools also get the books in time out of the funds allotted for libraries. Each primary school gets, of course a small number of books out of the allotment placed at the disposal of the DSE of whom we have seventeen in Bihar.

**QUESTION** Please tell us something about the coupon system?

**SHRI D N SINHA** The Superintendent of Libraries at the centre issues coupons to schools. These coupons authorize the headmaster to buy books worth the amount specified in a coupon. Instead of giving grants in cash they are given a coupon which is a sort of a cheque. They present it to the nominated bookseller who supplies the books. As I said yesterday, it is not always possible for all the booksellers to supply the very books that are wanted by a particular headmaster,

but efforts are made by the authorities, I mean the inspecting officer, to see that the headmaster gets the books he wants.

QUESTION. You say that you grant a sum of Rs. 2,500/- to a government higher secondary school. Is that grant recurring?

SHRI D N SINHA. No, it is not a recurring grant. But apart from this there is also a recurring grant. Unfortunately even in the case of government schools it is Rs. 120/- only.

QUESTION. When is the library kept open?

SHRI D N SINHA. The library is kept open during school hours, because there are no whole time librarians. I know of a mission school which keeps the library open outside school hours too. I think we have another public school which is a purely government managed institution, which also keeps its library open outside school hours. But that school has a whole time librarian.

QUESTION. I would like to ask a question. You have said, if I have not misunderstood you, that you do not give recognition to any school unless they have 1000 books worth Rs. 1,000/-. Is that correct, and is it applicable to schools in rural areas?

SHRI D N SINHA. Yes, it is. Unless the school has one thousand books valued at least at a thousand rupees, that is another way of saying that they should have books worth more than one thousand rupees, they are not recognized.

SHRI P N GOUR. Many school librarians have contributed very thought-provoking talks to this discussion and I would have really liked the discussion to be confined to school libraries. I have not been a school teacher myself, but I have been a teacher of the subject of school library administration to the trainees and this is how my interest in school libraries has emanated. Besides, as the librarian of the central library, my help was requisitioned by several principals of schools for suggesting ways and means to improve their service. And that is how I got behind the scenes and had practical experience and knowledge of how the school libraries are run in my state.

I am indeed grateful to the organizers of this symposium for having included school library as one of their subjects in the symposium, because this subject has been consistently

ignored both by the educators and the librarians. In fact, there is no educational agency which has been so completely neglected in the past by them. They have shown absolutely no vision and have proved themselves, if I may say so with all respect to them, incapable of appreciating the potential value of their school libraries. In the more advanced countries of the West school libraries are today mature well organized institutions. They do not need any arguments for their existence. But here in India, in spite of the recommendations of the most well known commission, the Mudaliar Commission, the report of which is almost a classic on which our whole educational programme of secondary school is being based, nothing serious has been done about school libraries. I think it is high time something serious was done.

Shri Sinha, my deputy director of secondary education has told you about grants. You know how far these grants do go, even if there are grants at all. Of course, it is quite easy to make grants to schools. But it is another matter to make these grants actually effective and workable. The Mudaliar Commission pointed out many inherent defects in our educational system. Mr. Nikhil Ranjan Roy has promised to put that educational system in its proper perspective. We have in our limited way some idea of the perspective in which our educational programme is working and we will have to introduce quite a number of new schemes, but the only scheme which has not received any attention is the school library. So I will just confine myself to the summary of those recommendations which my friends have made with a few of my own. In view of this persistently gross neglect of the organization of school libraries as an integral part of the educational system, it is imperative that this problem should be prominently highlighted.

I make bold to suggest that a school library enquiry committee on the lines of the Advisory Committee for Public Libraries, positively constituted by the central government in 1957, or failing that each state government should constitute to enquiry into and report on school libraries. I know the acceptance of this proposal is a very problematical one. I do not think the government are going to look at it. But in the meantime how are we going to tackle the problem as



it exists even without the commission or without its recommendations to go upon? To come to the basic issues, what are the four essential requirements by which the school library can properly render service? In my opinion the four essential and basic requirements are the appointment of a whole time qualified librarian, which I suppose even 99% of our schools do not have, provision of a fully equipped library room, provision of an adequate book collection—that is again a problem; our deputy director has said that the collections are lopsided, others had said that there is absolutely no system in the selection of books—and fourthly a suitable library grant apart from the general grant of a school. I shall very briefly elaborate these four points.

In my state of Bihar, a beginning has been made in this direction and school teachers, on deputation, have been participating in a short training on library science. I am talking to you about the trained librarians for the school, with a special paper on school librarianship, a subject which I had the privilege of teaching. So far, we have been able to turn out only very few librarians and considering the number of high school in our state, or for the matter of that, in all other states, we cannot say how long we will take to train an adequate number of school librarians. So one suggestion which I have to make is that the Indian universities should introduce school librarianship as a subject at a postgraduate training stage. The plea that the training college syllabus is too full to permit of an additional subject should not be allowed to stop this scheme. Well, you read so many other papers in the teachers' training course, why not introduce a paper on school librarianship also, as part of your teachers training curriculum? In addition, for those teachers who want to take up school librarianship as a whole time job a course of at least three months regular training should be provided. Such a course should include as fields of study, a study of children's books, general principles of school library administration, the technical process of librarianship and the use of the library in the life and work of the school. Now, in any case, the present system of entrusting the work of looking after the school library to a teacher, untrained in the library's craft, in addition to his teaching duties, either without or with

a miserable remuneration, must go Every school with a decent number of students must have a full time librarian Now whether such a person should be a trained librarian with a teacher's orientation or a trained teacher with a librarian's orientation is immaterial, so long as he is trained in the technique of school Library administration and is familiar with the work and ways of the school curriculum and its educational programme Standards for this new brand of library staff have yet to be created in our country And it is only teachers of vision and devotion who can do it

Now then about the provision of accommodation As mentioned earlier, the majority of our schools have no proper library room Library books are found housed in locked cupboards, in school halls, in corridors, in classrooms and the teachers' or students' common room It is obvious that without a separate library room, full and effective library service is impossible It is, therefore, imperative that a room should be set apart in the existing school buildings for this purpose And provision for a functional library room should be made in school buildings which may be constructed in future

The third prerequisite is a suitable and adequate book collection I suppose this point does not require any elaboration Whoever is in charge, he should seek the co-operation of all the teachers in suggesting what books should be collected This should not be an ad hoc lump purchase sort of thing once in a year, but it should be a routine, going from week to week or even from day to day And it may be mentioned that with the growing abundance of good and varied publications in Indian languages, the task of book selection for school libraries is becoming much easier now Still the co-operation of other teachers and the use of book selection aids will be most helpful in making good and worth while selections.

Finally comes the question of adequate provision of finances Satisfactory school library service is obviously dependent on adequate financial resources As has been very aptly said, maximum results cannot be expected from minimum expenditure It need hardly be said that the financial resources available to school libraries is generally inadequate Well, as far as grants in my own state are concerned, you have

just been told about them. Such grants in most states are not only inadequate for satisfactory library service, but are also not regulated on any recognized principle of flat or graduated rate allotment. The grants should, therefore, not only be increased but should also be properly regulated. Now these are the minimum prerequisites of the school library service. Given these, the school library can at least take a start, rendering rudimentary library service to the students by providing material for study, for reference and recreational reading.

You find in a large majority of our schools even these basic provisions do not exist and any talk of modern use of public library to which Miss Diehl has referred for curriculum enrichment, for integration of class work with library service, for utilizing library material for work projects, for training boys and girls in the use of the library for graded library work, all these may appear premature or academic. But in order to have a correct perspective it is desirable to be familiar with the extremely beneficial use to which the school libraries are being put in more advanced countries and then it will become easier for us to follow the path already blazed by experienced school librarians.

## CHAPTER V

### CHILDREN LIBRARY

**MODERATOR · SHRI B S KESAVAN**

**MISS RUTH C. KRUEGER** Our afternoon session deals with children's libraries Shri Bimal Ghosh, better known as "Moumachi" has very generously accepted the assignment of talking to us on "why children read" I am wondering whether we could also ask him what children read

**SHRI BIMAL GHOSH** (Founder, Manimela movement in Bengal)

Perhaps in the field of organizing children's libraries by the children themselves, the Manimela organization, founded by my humble self, has done the pioneer's job Now all over India nearly 200 Manimela units possess their own children's libraries, even in the remote villages, with varying stocks of selected children's books from a minimum of 300 up to 3,000 To run these libraries as scientifically as possible, we have been giving preliminary library training to our youth leaders in our annual training camps For this purpose, our Manimela Mahakendra has published a book called "Kishore Pathagar" in the year 1945 And since then this book has helped not only the organizers of Manimela units, but also others to establish small, but well-run children's libraries in the schools in rural areas Of course as all our enterprises are based on voluntary services and idealistic contributions, the silent builders of hundreds of children's libraries and their librarians even after so many years of successful existence have not been given proper recognition

I will now speak from my experience, particularly as a writer of juvenile literature and the editor of the children's page of a leading daily of our country This discussion on children's libraries mainly concerns the supervision of children's reading which is generally a perplexing problem for most of our librarians and teachers The difficulty is due in part to lack of acquaintance with suitable books in various lines and in part to the fact that it is no easy matter for adults to gauge adequately the reading interests of children But the world of children's reading is not wholly unpenetrable, and if carefully studied, we may justify certain very definite conclusions I have made such studies

I think the first and foremost thing we all should know is why children read. Children read because of three fundamental characteristic factors: curiosity, desire for wish fulfillment and the tendency to imitate. Within the limits of individual differences, every child who reads at all is following one or more of these three urges. A normal child is an active vibrating question mark. Almost anything he observes may become for him an object of curiosity. The trait is one which has an interesting development in the child. The young infant is not in the strict sense of the word curious. He reacts to sense perception, but not with much active interest. Hold a watch beside the infant's ear, he listens, but only passively. Hold a bright coloured object in front of his eyes, he stares at it and may possibly clutch at it, but his attention is only momentary. By the time the child is two or three years old, this passive observation is gradually merged into very active interest. The watch ticks, but what makes it tick? The bell rings but why does it ring? From three years on the child's curiosity steadily increases,—why, what, how, he asks with eager questioning concerning all he sees. It is only the normal child who displays intelligent curiosity, the imbecile or idiot never gets beyond the stage of passive observation and mild wonder. The questions he asks are likely to be meaningless or vague and any kind of answer satisfies him. An insistent curiosity is one of the best signs of superior intelligence.

There are three ways by which the child may satisfy his curiosity. By questioning, by observation and by reading. The child of three asks questions, but the child of ten has learned that most adults are after all painfully ignorant or a secretive lot and he seeks the truth of much of the information he wants in books. In my study of children's questions made through the columns of *Ananda Bazar Patrika* and the children's page I have been editing, it is found that the subjects on which children show decided curiosity fall chiefly into five classes. Forces of nature, mechanical forces, origin of life, religion and mythological stories, Heaven and death. All the 90% of the children's questions tabulated fall into one or another of these five classes. The 10% that were not so classifiable were found merely inquisitive questions. Of

these questions asked by children under ten years of age, over one half are on topics relating to nature or the workings of natural forces, the what and why of the Sun, Moon, plants, animals. Nearly three fourths of this group related causation. Why is this so, what isn't that so. Probably most observant parents and teachers and librarians have noted that this is true. But the significance of the fact in connection with children's reading has been overlooked. Undoubtedly, the home and school should provide the type of reading that conforms with the development of curiosity at different ages. The child of our years who wants to know, who puts the stars in the sky at night, may have fascinating fields open to him if he is allowed to listen to simple realistic nature stories. The child of nine who asks why some stars twinkle brighter than others, what keeps the airship in the air, may be given a book of natural sciences that has been written in simple, non-technical language. Unfortunately, some twenty years ago, when I took charge of editing the first vernacular children's page in India, books of real informative value that would successfully answer the questions of the child from three to thirteen years of age were not at all available. So from the very beginning of my assignment, I invited questions from the child members and to the best of my ability tried to answer those with the help of authoritative books and persons. My earnest endeavours and hard labour brought me the rewards very soon. My page and particularly the answer column attracted eminent educationists, intellectuals and others, including poet Tagore, Dr Satyendra Nath Bose, Dr Meghnad Saha, Dr P C Mahalanobis and hundreds of teachers, professors, scientists and engineers. All of them very kindly wrote me encouraging letters appreciating my line of action in building up the reading interest in children and for the development of Bengali juvenile literature. In the year 1941, all my answers to the children's questions were compiled in a classified manner and published in the name of *Jnan Vijnaner Madhubhanda*, that is, the honeypot of knowledge and science. This book ran into two editions within that year, creating a record for juvenile books. Even today, this book is considered as the best selling juvenile book, having almost two editions every year. This book has at least proved the need for the books that will answer in simple

terms, but with actual facts, the child's questions regarding natural forces. But it is only in the last few years that some of our young scientists and colleagues have been willing to get forth their findings in an interesting form in language that a child can understand. I am glad to announce that in this respect our Bengali juveniles are now much ahead of other Indian languages. As I have stated before, in every field the child's natural curiosity is an important factor in the choice of reading. It is undoubtedly true that the majority of children's books in the market today neither satisfy the intellectual needs of the child nor provide desirable entertainment and instruction. The mind of the child is an active reasoning mechanism which is constantly being stimulated to curiosity regarding the phenomena of life. The great need is for books that will satisfy this curiosity by giving actual facts in an entertaining narrative form which the children can understand and enjoy.

A second motive that influences the children's choice of books is the satisfaction of unconscious desires. It is to this natural characteristic of childhood that most of our modern juveniles are catering. A child does not read as an adult reads, for an hour's entertainment or instruction. He reads himself by a process of sympathy into the books and finds therein a satisfying fulfillment of his subconscious wishes. These wishes are of many kinds and like curiosity, they are the gradual development as the child matures. The earliest desires of a child are concerned largely with food. Fairy tales about sandesh shops with sweet cream roofs and Panīua pillars are naturally appealing to the young child. Nothing else arouses such keen sympathy as stories about children who have nothing to eat. Along with these, the fairy story wish develops. And the child dreams of obtaining all his desires by some sort of magical means. Gradually the self-assertive and masterly tendencies show themselves in a liking for stories about fabulous worlds and grandeur. In boys the fantastic wish generally includes some wish for personal power or leadership over other children. In girls it more often involves the desire for an abundance of beautiful clothes and for personal comforts and luxuries. The day dreams and wishes of the two sexes are characteristically different. The boy's wish

is generally concerned with adventures, physical prowess or leadership in games and sports, the girl wishes for beauty for admiration and personal care. On the other hand, books also influence the contents of the child's wishes and day-dream. The right kind of reading may inculcate worthy ambition and result in healthy activity. The wrong kind may lead to fantastic conceptions of reality. Especially is the child influenced when his fantastic fairy tales begin to merge into the practical desire of the ten or twelve year old boy or girl. Suitable books may then lead to very definite forms of activity of an educational nature. The boy may begin to build models of mechanical objects mentioned in his reading, or be influenced to take up a variety of interests and hobbies. The wrong kind of reading may weaken the tendencies to helpful curiosity and lead the child to seek more and more satisfaction of his desires in the stories of unreal life. That is happening in our country now.

A third factor influencing the child's reading is imitation. Nothing is more natural than for children to find in those around them, specially their elders, the models for their behaviour and the cues for their likes and dislikes. It is in this way that a large part of their education is gained. In the matter of reading, imitation is specially important. In the first place, the child whose parents read is more likely to form the reading habit than the child who sees little reading in his home. In the second place the child's appreciation of a given kind of literature is likely to be considerably influenced by the attitude of relatives and our librarian friends. Not that the child is always amenable to suggestion with respect to his reading. The clandestine reading which children do shows that this is far from being the case. However, the comparative study of aesthetic cultures of races reveals clearly the functional nature of aesthetic appreciation and the influence of motivation in determining its trails. Literary appreciation is no exception to the rules.

From this brief consideration of the reasons for children reading, three conclusions may be drawn. First, in order to take advantage of the child's natural curiosity, we should try to ascertain by means of a careful consideration of its spontaneous questions at different ages what subjects are



uppermost in his mind, and we should then provide such reading as will answer his questions and will add to his general knowledge of nature and life. Second, because of the large part played by the wish fulfillment motive in the child's reading, we should put before him such books as will tend to arouse normal and healthful desires and lead to fruitful activity.

Third, because the child is so largely a creature of imitation we should see that his companions are of the kind whose reading is not objectionable and we should strive in every case to create an environment that will encourage reading of instructive and inspirational as well as entertaining books.

**SHRI BANERJEE** Mr. Ghosh has given a very good account, he has spoken about child psychology and literature for children. May I know what has been his contribution to library service for children?

**SHRI BIMAL GHOSH** We started the Mamukla organization in the year 1940 and since then, along with our recreational activities, we have always encouraged children to establish their own libraries in different Mamukla units. Since some seventeen years, we are arranging annual training camps for youth leaders on how to run their children's libraries as scientifically as they can for making it worthy sources of providing education and entertainment. Of course our libraries are not well furnished often we keep our books in packing boxes, we get books from the children by way of contribution with the money they have saved from their pocket allowances and in this way we have developed nearly 200 children's libraries in the remotest villages and the city also. The lending system and cataloguing are being done very scientifically, I think. Of course, I do not know if it is as scientifically done as it is in America or in England, but they are trying their best to do it in a scientific manner.

**MISS RUTH C. KRUEGER** The important thing is to get the book to the child anyway, whether scientifically processed or not is an intermediate thing. Does that answer your question, Mr. Banerjee?

**SHRI BIMAL GHOSH** One more thing, we do not collect books in a haphazard manner. We check all the books to

see if the books are suitable for children's reading or not. In many libraries, the librarians buy books often without looking into its contents and that is not very helpful for building up healthy children and healthy child lives. I may be taken to be a conservative person, but I believe this and we always teach our youth leaders to know the child mind first and so I discussed the subject before you with an idea that you people also may be interested to know the child mind first before you run a good children's library.

MISS RUTH C. KRUEGER: What are the qualities that we should look for in selecting a book for the children's library? What does the child demand of the book? One of the first thing that come to mind is that the child demands sincerity and honesty. He is very keen to discover whether the author is honest and is really sincere in what he is writing. Possibly, another quality that the child looks for, though not in every book, is a sense of humour. The child has a very high sense of humour and he delights in a book that has good clean humour.

Quality of writing is another thing that we might keep in mind. The child will develop its sense of good writing by reading, though in school he is expected to learn some of these things himself. There are several things to start with. Perhaps someone from the floor would like to contribute something to this point. What should we look for when we are buying books for the children's libraries? What are the qualities? Of course, we think of format, we think of nice illustrations and that type of thing. But perhaps you in your work with children, if you have had experience, can tell us what you have discovered that appeals to the child—the lasting value in a book for children?

SHRI BIMALENDU MAJUMDAR (Secretary, Indian Library Association): I think first of all we must define the age group for children's libraries.

MISS RUTH C. KRUEGER: I suppose we think of children through the first six or seven years of school. We like to think in terms of the children's schools, children's books, and then the youth age. So you have the early teenagers, you have the younger children up to say 12 or 14 and then the early teenager, and they fall into another group. The young adult

or the young person who has passed the child age fells, perhaps not insulted, but embarrassed to go into the children's room, although there are many books in that room that he enjoys. So librarians have discovered that they need to make adjustment and have the young peoples room as well as the children's room if facilities allow. So we would say that perhaps the early teens would be the young people and under that the children.

**SHRI BIMALENDU MAJUMDAR.** The point I want to get clarified is what is the age group of the children's library? Generally we take between 6 and 12. Now some parents have been asking me, then what about those children from 13 to 17? I am told that nobody can be a member of National Library unless he reaches the age of 18, although he may be reading in the honours standard. So what about the other group? Are we including this bigger children in our discussion here or not? Are we keeping upto the 12 year age level?

**MISS RUTH C. KRUEGER.** As you know, Mr Majumdar is very much concerned with this problem. The Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture has recently opened—you saw the main library yesterday, perhaps not all of you saw the children's library that is coming into being. So he is very keenly interested in it. Anyone wish to speak on this?

**SHRI BIMAL GHOSH.** You know that in Manimela our members are from 6 to 16.

**SHRI BIMALENDU MAJUMDAR.** No my problem is what about the other two years? Are we going to include them in our public libraries or are we just leaving them in the lurch not doing anything for them?

**SHRI BIMAL GHOSH.** I was referring to the Manimela organization. But there should be no such hard and fast rule regarding reading habits and the satisfaction obtained by reading. As for example, I may cite my own life before you. When I was a boy of 12, I almost finished all the good novels published at that time from the public library and I think that has not done any injury to my mind, probably that has helped me a lot. Of course, I did it with the guidance of our librarian. He really helped me a lot for selecting books and to progress with general reading. He used to know the minds of children. Some children are very clever. They can under-

stand a good many things at a very young age. In your schools also you have found that some children who are very young of age, are very clever in mind. So there should be no hard and fast rule. After 16 years when they go to colleges I think they should go to the public libraries and with the help of our librarian, friends they may read good books.

MISS RUTH C. KRUEGER. We do suffer a big loss sometimes in our libraries by not providing for the group that Mr Majumdar is very much concerned about that age between 12 and 18. That is a serious matter and that needs to be geared to the young adult.

SHRI B. S. KLSAVAN. This discussion of children's libraries is very dear to me. It is something in which I am very deeply involved.

I just now heard a few remarks about the uncared for age group. You know, Rabindranath has written a beautiful essay upon this particular age, where you are not considered young enough to be with the children and you are not considered old enough to be with the men, the in-between stage of hell through which everyone of us passes at a particular age. The reason why this age group has not yet been taken in hand is not because this problem has not been present in our minds, but you see, we had to start somewhere and in doing so, we have got to gradually step up our efforts to include every age group.

There is a general tendency to consider the child as an abbreviation of the adult. Well, he is not. As a matter of fact you can say that in most cases the grown up individual is the vitiated form of a child which, if it had been given the right chance to grow would have grown differently. I think it was George Bernard Shaw who said that normality is about the most abnormal thing that you can find in the world. Even as you can really find a pair of eyes which can be really normal, even so, as far as the normality of the human being is concerned, you find that the Wordsworthian tenet of "The shades of the prison house growing around and enclosing the growing boy" has something very profound and very truthful about it. One thing we must learn. You see, the sentimental mollycoddling of the child is not what is meant by an interest in the child. We must realize that far from being irresponsible, the growing child is the most responsible form of existence that

you have I speak from experience. We always have been educated to the feeling that if you give anything delicate in the hands of a child it is bound to drop it Or if you give a book into its hands, it is bound to tear it And the tendency of the adult is "don't touch it; don't handle it", with the result that this hysterical insistence on keeping the child away from a normal participation in your life has really created a complex in the child that ultimately it will come to drop the delicate thing and it will come to tear the book The first thing to do is to be able to trust the child This is an example which I am very fond of giving and which I frequently give, but it is true That if you have ever seen a child being entrusted with responsibility, to hand the sweet dishes around when visitors are around, or if it is asked to fill a cup of water to the brim which it holds with both its hands and comes on tiptoe and finally puts on the table and stands with its hands clasped behind its back, feeling very proud of its achievement that it has not spilt a drop of water, not that sort of feeling, that pride in achievement, is the quality which you and I must exploit and capitalize upon A child is a very responsible form of existence And the only thing that is necessary is that the suspicious, distrustful adult should be educated in order to try and see that this ability to vest responsibility in the child is cultivated in him

You go to America, you go to England—and please do not think that when I say America or England I am one of those slavishly built minds which has to go to America and England for its examples, and does not find anything good in this country—but it is true whether you like it or not that when it comes to the organization of the children's libraries you do not find a heckling adult in charge of their children's libraries There she is, in the background, as a sort of an advisory person, pleasant, eager to help if wanted, but always trying to see to it that the little ones manage the library, that they feel a sense of possession about the library, that they walk in and out with a feeling that it is theirs and that there is no adult who will conceivably nag them to do this and that

Downstairs I had the privilege of having all of you in the children's library As professional librarians you may find many things wrong with it For one thing, you don't find

labels on the books, for another thing you do not find Cutter numbers or Cutter marks or whatever you talk about. In other words, you find it is the despair of a professional librarian to enter that library. All you have got is bright coloured shelves, free moving space, comfortable chairs to sit upon and nothing between the book and the child. You find there are no specific sequences of arrangement. Now, there are two schools of thought on this matter. One school of thought tells you that it is very necessary that from the very time of cognition in the child you should instil into it the practice of using a library, how to finger a 5" x 3" card, how to look into the card cabinet, to try and get itself educated into the way a library is arranged. But please remember. These remarks apply not so much to the age group between 6 and 10 but to the age group above ten. If you try to make a child of 6 or 7 try to use a card catalogue you might be doing something estimable in your point of view, but you are wasting your time. You find that all the child wants is a very cheerful place to sit down in and inviting books for it to read and it darts from place to place. And one of the qualities of the child, unlike that of the vitiated adult, is that it does not prefer privacy of a small little space to pour over a book in solitude, irritated if there is the slightest swish or sound about him. A child opens a book, looks at a page, glows with joy when it sees something, shouts with joy when it is interesting and immediately runs up to the other children to share this experience with them, with the result that it is not uncommon to see six children huddled over one open book. This communal tendency of the child to get to the other child or to the other children and to try and use these books is something that you must study carefully, please do not put spinsterly peoples—spinsterly in spirit I mean—in charge of libraries. Nagging, forbidding people, people who have got the ability to say "don't do that don't do this, sh, sh, sh" this type of existence is one thing that you do not want as far as the children's library is concerned. I am not trying to say that you must run a pandemonium in a children's library. I am not asking that you should allow them to run riot in that place. But there is a certain midway between these things and it is possible for you, you will find in the library here—I am not trying to sug-

gest that it is an ideal library—it is something that I have managed to shape out of old godowns. As you can see one of the great limitations of those two rooms is bad ventilation because you do not find a draft of air passing through. But that is not my fault, those are the rooms I had, and I had to make something out of them; and though you have got a couple of exhaust fans which sound like an engine room and we have some fans all over the place, we hope to do something with it in course of time.

But you will find another thing about the children's library. You will find that there are no thresholds anywhere for the child to stumble upon. You will find that there are no doors jutting out for the child to hit itself against when it has to run about in the library. You will find that wherever the child looks, its eyes rest upon something pleasant, colourful, stimulating. You will find that the chairs that it sits upon and the tables that it has to put its book upon are designed so that it does not hurt itself in its excitement when it moves from place to place. There are no corners or edges in any of these bits of furniture and in the whole project one happy thing is that all the material that the children's library is made out of are things that you can shape out in this country. Nothing has to be imported from outside, even the decorations you find over there are beautiful handmade textiles which are stretched out on circular playboards which you can change any time you want at very little expense because a yard of that cloth does not cost you more than about Rs 2.75 and for six months, Rs 2.75 of colourful investment is worthwhile. And you will find that the pictures that have been hung there are not pictures which the children are doomed to look upon day in and day out for months together, but things that you can change at will.

We are going to get an aquarium very shortly. Some people said, "What, are you running a library or are you running a tamasha?" But that is not true. The aquarium is not there as a diversion for the children, because the children are attracted as they are, but it is something to stimulate their imaginations which are always worthy of stimulation. And you never know *what child will catch fire with what thing*. And believe me, if after years you find that you

make one enthusiast in zoology or in nature study, out of the children that come to your library, it is very much worthwhile having that aquarium. The proposal, I must tell you, got turned down by the finance ministry six months back when I asked for the aquarium. The man in charge noted down on the files "I am surprised that the librarian should like to divert the attention of the children from cold books"—he used the word "cold" if you please. I mean to say you can see what sort of blood flows in his veins—"from the cold books to the aquarium". The poor fellow didn't know, with the result that I had to send him a cart load of material where children's libraries do possess certain attractive things. And then afterwards he agreed and we are getting the aquarium very soon.

You see, the point to remember is this. There are two ways of running a children's library. You can make too much out of it. In other words, you can make a children's library a place of entertainment and not so much of instruction. A library, whether you like it or not is bound to be a book centre. And the object of a man or authority opening a children's library is to encourage the reading habit in the child. You can overdo it, but there is always that sense of proportion, you can use film strips, audio-visual aids, or a stretch of blackboard. With a piece of chalk in its hands and let loose on a long stretch of blackboard, you don't know what a child cannot do. The most amusing results happen and it is educating to you as well as to the child to watch what happens. And what is more, there is no point merely in having good furniture, bright walls, happy textiles, colourful things and leaving the children's library in mid-air like that, because the greatest work remains afterwards. In other words, week after week, month after month, patiently, knowledgeably, the children's librarian has to evolve programmes of storytelling, use the books in the library. For this particular purpose, we have to get people with imagination and sensibility to talk to the children and pick out the talents in them, make them tell stories themselves, as far as possible, mould the material which they have in their hands, and in the formation in this programme depends the ability and the quality of the children's librarian.

In America, some of the largest paid librarians are the



children's librarians and I was present when John Corey, the man in charge of the circulation department of the New York Public Library—a fabulous department—was unashamedly trying to steal a children's librarian from another system of libraries, by trying to tempt her with a few hundred more dollars. But I am glad to say that the woman had more character and resisted his temptations. He even took her to Staten Island with me on a trip and showed her everything that was there. And then he told me, "Keep your fingers crossed, Kesavan, I hope I will get this woman for our children's department because we are very hard up for children's librarians and she is in Cleveland Public Library system. She is doing beautifully over there and I am hoping that by offering her another five hundred dollars a year she will come over here." He did not succeed, but I am telling you this story to show what high premium there is upon really qualified children's librarians.

Of course, there is one thing about this. People say that the best qualified people for children's librarians are women, and I think it is true. Of course it all depends on the woman. We should not start recruiting librarians as at one time we started recruiting our teachers in the olden days. Any woman who was frustrated, the father could not get her married, or she was a widow, or something was wrong with her, therefore the best thing you could do with her is to put her to teach in a school. Now, if you invest the teaching and the education of children to women who are stultified and frustrated in their own lives, what imagination will they have to handle other people's children? What sympathies are there within them? How will their hearts warm up to children? There should be no bitterness in a woman's mind, there should be no cynicism in her make-up. She should be a full-blooded creature, happy, joyous, with a love of life and a love of children and therefore, it is absolutely essential that you should not get psychological perverts in charge of education or in charge of libraries. You should get the finest people that you can possibly get, not smart people who look beautiful, because beauty is not one of feature, beauty is one of the intonation of voice, the way you look at the children, the way your outgoing spirit welcomes the children and you see that they are managed happily.

Therefore, children's librarianship is not meant to be a causal pastime to be playfully gone through by people who think it comprises story-telling or showing a few pictures to the children, or trying to run a film out there, or having bright little books to hand around. If this is the concept of the children's librarian then you need not become one at all. You find the mind has to work very hard, the programme has to be related to the books on hand, a study has to be made of the children under your care, the schools have to be contacted, in this particular respect and believe me, a children's library should always be manageable.

You cannot have a national children's library for obvious reasons. Even this library is not made for all the children all over India or all over Calcutta. You cannot have more than about sixty or hundred children in the library at one time. And why do I say that? Because even in the running of a children's library there is a certain intimacy of association between the children's librarian and the children, even as a teacher in a specialized school watches over her charges and finds out which is the lame duck that has to be helped through, which is the one which has to be coached particularly, which is the little child whose imagination has to be particularly stimulated, with the result that the mental approach to each child is different and the teacher can adjust herself to the needs of the child, even so, in the children's library, you find that the librarian has to see to it that her charges are carefully looked after and watched over and in the selection of the books, the way you talk to them and give them the book, you will find that a great field awaits people. If you please look at some of the courses that America and England run in children's librarianship, if you kindly look at the question papers that they have in some of those examinations if you have the privilege of seeing some of their children's libraries in operation, you will find that it is an intellectual occupation, and also a psychological adventure. And it is not just a gay pastime for people who like to have a real good time.

I am sure, quite a few of you who are present here have run some sort of children's library and we should be very grateful to you if you will come forth, however imperfect your experience, however rudimentary your start however limited

the scope that you have been afforded, all that will be valuable and you are welcome to use this forum this afternoon.

**SHRI BIMAL GHOSH** What Shri Kesavan has just spoken about is a matter dear to my own heart also. In our Manimela organisations, we run children's libraries. We do not have good furniture; the decorations are done by ourselves. Even the persons working in these libraries and given training in our annual training schemes are very young, say 18 to 20, and they consist of both boys and girls. We do not think that girls are better children's librarians, we have found that many boys also have that motherly understanding and approach to children. Those who are in charge of children's libraries will have to have a mother's feelings, a mother's anxiety and a mother's love for the children in their charge. I have received this love from a library. Born of a poor family, my parents were unable to send me to college, but the person in charge of the library that I used to go to with great love and understanding showed me the open door to worldly knowledge and wisdom, that I can never forget him. We try to instil the same ideal in our Manimela trainees. How to teach the children, how to love them. And as Shri Kesavan mentioned, in our libraries the children are never warned against reading aloud, or making a noise. It often happens that some child sees a picture of something that excites him and laughs so clearly and loudly that he startles everyone in the room. We have this freedom in our libraries and our libraries are spread out even in the remotest villages.

The almirahs in our libraries are made out of packing cases cut and fabricated by our own boys in their spare time. We do not worry about books being not returned or books being stolen—books are never stolen because the children have been given to understand that the books belong to them, it is theirs, and indeed, I have noticed that the children are most anxious to return books on time when the books have been taken home on loan.

We have organized our libraries very economically, we do not have to pay our librarians. And we give the responsibility of librarianship only to those boys and girls who can play with the children, who can bear the pranks of the children,

and who will not tire of answering innumerable questions from the children

We find differing talents among the children at our Manimelas. Some are good at sports, others have a musical bent and still others like to read. We try to train as our future librarians especially those who like to read because it is necessary that the librarian should have the habit of reading. This is particularly true of the children's librarian because he has to know which book the children enjoy, which portion they particularly like, etc. I do not know what is your feeling about the need for children's librarians to pass a librarianship course, but I am in complete agreement with Shri Kesavan on one point. The most important characteristic of the children's librarian should be the quality of heart and love and understanding of children. It is only then that he can enrich a few lives through the library. We have been able to do this and I am proud to say that among the children of West Bengal, our children of the Manimela are better mannered, better at learning and I am sure all of you also have observed this.

Unfortunately, there is so much of politics in every phase of life in our country, that we have been unable to get as much help as we might otherwise have received, because we have always refused to have any politics enter our organization. If political concepts are allowed to enter such a children's organization the very essence of its foundation will be destroyed. It is only those that have a certain amount of personal idealism that can successfully run a children's library or become a children's librarian. The success of your children's library effort will not depend upon how efficiently you write books, or catalogue those books, or keep your reference, but the justification of your effort is when we see what happens to those who have come to your library, later on in life.

We can start these children's libraries without much expense. But now-a-days I notice that everyone has developed the habit of demanding government grants. If we continue doing this, whatever progress we are making now will be hampered. And this has happened too. Since the time our Social Welfare Board has started giving us grants, I have noticed that meanness and pettiness, things that were entirely

absent ten years ago, have entered our Manimela libraries. It is my opinion that those who really want to achieve something should, instead of waiting for government help, try and stand on their own feet and then the library will be able to render efficient service.

In buying books for our children's libraries, we must remember to seek the help of and get suggestions from those persons who understand the child-mind, who know what the children will be interested in. Nowadays I find that most of our children's literature is of very poor quality. A few publishers buy copyrights very cheaply and bring out these books with quality that leaves much to be desired.

I have found that much more than what you can get out of books, it is personal contacts and the synthesis of book knowledge achieved through these contacts that enrich human life. I have tried, perhaps more than anyone else, to introduce an element of science into the children's literature in this country. Because of this, God has given me a vocation in life, a means of livelihood very much to my liking, where I think of children, work for children and not forced to do anything else.

I have noticed a new response among the children of the villages, but I must admit that the children of the cities disillusion me. May I tell Shri Kesavan and my other friends here. You have great plans for opening five children's libraries in Calcutta, but I think that will be just spending money. Instead of this, with the same amount of money, if you open fifty children's libraries in the villages, you will be rendering the right service where it is needed. City life now-a-days has become unreal. Even the children are insincere and snobbish because they are growing up in snobbish families. But if you concentrate your efforts in Calcutta, just to please the bigwigs, just to get publicity in the newspapers, then you will be failing your duty.

**SHRI B. S. KESAVAN** I can understand the spirit which prompted my friend to urge that children's libraries are formed in the villages. Even as Nihar said this morning, the emphasis ought to be on children's libraries in the villages and on villages. But please do not run away with the same prejudice that my friend has—he has no prejudice, he is really

stating a case and therefore when you are stating a case you have to be a little extreme in the statement of the case and so he ran away with his words, I think. You cannot possibly neglect the children in the towns as being "kapat" (insincere), as being perverted, as being evil, that they are snobs, and therefore the money that has been spent upon them is down in the drain. The argument, Sir, will be the other way, because of these reasons, there is a greater need for guidance services for these children. I have not got anything against villages; I would like to do that and this. As a matter of fact, the greater need in my opinion today is in the cities. By all means educate the children and get them library minded, but the most horrible, cruel thing is happening in the cities all over the world. We do not know what a bird is, we cannot even find out what the blueness of the sky is, we cannot possibly look at the grass and appreciate how green it is, in other words, we have forgotten to stand and stare and be happy. Absolutely cowed down, cribbed, cabined, confined, with only the alleys and the dirt and the smog and smoke, our personality and our minds are being so warped today that the urgent need is to bring the blueness of the sky, the greenness of the grass, the freshness of the air into the lives of the very city children who, you are right in saying, are now being condemned to a life of perverted mentality and a perverted attitude towards it. Therefore I would not agree with you, Sir, even for a moment that the need for libraries for children and the money spent for children's libraries in towns is a waste of money and that instead of spending all that money, if only we open fifty children's libraries in the villages we do a much better thing. I agree, opening libraries in the villages is important.

And another thing, Shri Ghosh, is this, and this is a long exploded myth also. You know very well, in the romantic period when the poets wrote their poetry, they had a particular approach to the villager. They said the villager, in contact with the rising and setting Sun, with all the fresh breezes blowing across him, is such an unspoiled child of nature who is incapable of "kapat" (insincerity), who is incapable of smallness of mind, that he is man's own creature in the context of wind and Sun and rain and shade. To tell you the

truth, all that you have got to do is to go to some village and come into contact with these unspoiled sons of the soil and you will find out the warp of their minds, the "Sankuchita Bhava" (narrowness) of their minds. They are as bad or as good as anyone else. Nihar used a picturesque expression, that the towns have sucked the blood of the villages. As a matter of fact, you know very well that has been the politician's counter, and these days anybody who has to say anything has to talk about the town sucking the blood of the village and then he thinks that he is on top of the world. The very nature of our development, the way the towns have developed, the way trade has flowed, acts as a magnet, you cannot help it. Evils are there, the benefits are also there. By all means let us attend to the villages. I agree with you, sir, I would be one with you to try and build up these children's libraries, but I would not share with you that forbidding attitude about the "Shaharer kapat" (the city's insincerity), the perverted minds of the young in the towns. They have as much need for the beneficence of God and the help of man as the children of the villages do.

SHRI RAM GOSWAMI: Should there be a separate set up for the children's library or it should be within the public library system?

SHRI B. S. KESAVAN: You see first of all, that question envisages one presumption that there is a public library system. And the answer is obvious. The children's library forms part of the library system. And the child has to step from the kindergarten to the growing school and then to the college and on to life. Even so he has to use the adult library sometime in his life. Therefore, if the atmosphere of the library is built around him, and the children's library forms part of the library system, there is a certain natural development of the child and the librarian in the grown up section will have the advantage of getting a client who already knows how to conduct himself within the precincts of the library, how to handle books, how to direct his curiosity, all that sort of thing is very advantageous. Therefore, from the point of view of the advantages of the situation, to tell you the truth, in India, my answer to that question is, anybody who is anxious to start a children's library, provided he is persistent

and his efforts last for a number of years, he is welcome to start the children's library, either as a part of a library system or away from the library system. Today, the need is to get the children together and give them the opportunity to read in happy surroundings. That is the fact. We cannot theorize on these matters. We cannot evolve general principles on these matters. To tell you the truth, our attitude has to be empirical in the development of children's libraries. Because, if in Assam you find that a state of affairs prevails that the Welfare Board has to start children's libraries, start them by all means, but for God's sake do not start the children's libraries and leave them in midair. Because that is what happens. The inauguration ceremony, the enthusiasm, everything there, a few bright chairs and tables, a few lovely pictures on the wall, and then afterwards the routine is completely forgotten and the children languish every day and you find that the books get bedraggled on the shelves, nobody pays any attention, there is no renovation of the books, there isn't that perpetual enthusiasm that is necessary. Please remember the children's library cannot be conducted by anybody except by one who is perpetually young and enthusiastic about his job every morning. A routine minded person can never run the children's library successfully.

**SHRI RAM GOSWAMI** We have just started our children's corner in the State Central Library. Our library was established in 1955 but the children's library was only started in 1959 to meet the needs of the local children from 6 to 14 age group. The children's library is a wing of the public library system in our State. It has a different entrance, opens at ten in the morning and closes at 5 p.m. Any parent or guardian may stand surety for the children. There are facilities to read books in the children's corner and books are also issued.

We have the problem of languages. This is a problem common to all states in India. We do not have many books in regional languages. In Shillong most of the students generally read in missionary schools and know English and they can take advantage of our English books which comprises the major portion of our children's library stock. I must admit that books in Assamese language are of poor quality.

We try to give importance to educational activities as



well as recreation and entertainment. We have a provision to have playground activities. The plan is being scrutinized by the Educational Department and we expect a full fledged playground attached to the children's library in the third five year plan, if not earlier.

We do not have a qualified children's librarian at the moment. A person with training in librarianship has been put in charge of the children's library. We organize book festivals and book exhibitions for the children from time to time and we also propose to conduct some story hours in our children's library.

We provide furniture suitable for children, but after seeing the children's library in the National Library this morning I think I made a mistake in making our chairs square. As Shri Kesavan suggested all these must be round, they may not hurt the children when they are playing in the children's library.

The children's library, as a matter of fact, is an absolutely new venture in Assam. Experience will probably correct many things and I hope in the near future we shall be able to establish good children's libraries in Assam.

The district libraries also have a children's wing with special collections for the children and the school students will be invited to come with their teachers to see our children's libraries from time to time to interest the children in library.

SHRI K C THAKUR. Along with the units of mobile libraries, my government also sanctioned seventeen children's corners—not children's libraries—attached to the district, state libraries. These children's corners are not so beautiful and attractive as the children's library attached to the National Library. You cannot find such beautiful furniture, such a beautiful, well equipped room there. But there is a children's corner with a few sets of furniture, specially designed for the children and a big stock specially earmarked for them.

The books for the children are not classified and catalogued very strictly. We have classified them in a few broad subjects such as "Katha" (In the sense of classics), "kahini" (stories) "Jnan Vijnan" (knowledge and science), etc. It is very unpleasant to mention here that we do not have a full time

children's librarian in my library. The government has given a provision only to appoint a part-time librarian on Rs. 25/-, which is a ridiculous amount. That will not be a pay, but an honorarium. Anyway, we have managed to procure a lady, a teacher in school for that part time job, and she is doing the work with half-hearted co-operation.

We receive a recurring grant of Rs 940/- every year and the laughable amount of Rs 100/- per year as a book grant for the children's library. In my opinion, the children's library requires not only books but also other reading materials, attractive toys, etc., to attract children of different age groups. As we have got no special provision for these in our budget, we utilize the grant for that also.

SHRI B S KESAVAN: You know, all of us like toys, children should have toys, but it all depends upon whether you are going to run a sort of a Montessori corner in your children's library. Remember, it all depends upon the age groups you are catering for. The thought now in the back of my mind is why should you not leave well enough alone and ask our kindergarten educationists to do their work properly? Let them do all that they want to. The state provides them for that also and as far as toys and other things are concerned, they are necessary. But in a children's library, the age group is from 6 to 12, I don't think the question of toys arises so much. I don't know, I am not laying down the law or anything.

SHRI D N SINHA: When I heard of these toys I was reminded of an experiment being carried on at Bhagalpur in Bihar. There is a school for young children called the Navayug Vidyalay. It is a very progressive school and Meccano sets have been provided. And the children read the instructions and actually make certain things inside a well equipped room. There is also a small natural history museum. It has stuffed and living birds and they also read about the same birds in the books. So far as I know that is the only school of its kind in Bihar. It is better, in my opinion, than any of the mission schools for young children and is conducted on the basis of Indian culture.

There is another point about it. It is run by Shri Himat-singh who is a wonderful man. The state also has been helping

it, but it is purely a private enterprise. Another point about the school is that it is open to children on Sundays. There is a programme of other children coming to that center, observing all the activities going on there and taking part in the activities. This sort of public enterprise run by a person who gets very little help from the government is worth emulating. The school itself has a very neat, cosy, clean building, a very beautiful lawn and a small garden. It was visited recently by Dr Zakir Hussain when I was Principal of the Teachers' Training School, Bhagalpur. He mentioned this to me and he said it is an excellent school the like of which perhaps does not exist in Bihar. I don't know if there are any such institutions in Calcutta.

SHRI B S KESAVAN: That is very nice. I am very grateful to you for the information, Sir. But what you said really very rightly and happily pertains to a school. It is a school, and it is correct that it should be so and we are happy that it is so. But when it comes to the running of a children's library—Of course, I have given the game away by talking about an aquarium. Well, if you can go in for an aquarium I don't see why you should not go in for birds cages, and as you said dead birds and stuffed birds and live birds, and a reptiliary and aviary, and well I mean, there is a whole vista open for you and that way lies ruin also. But all the same, I really wonder. You see, there is a basic controversy even on the higher planes on this matter. What a library should do and what a library should not do. For example, there is one school of thought in America which says library means communication. Now communication of knowledge in any particular way is welcome into this centre and therefore if you even make a library a sort of a social centre wherein there is not merely a book-centred activity, but also there is an entertainment-centred activity, well, it is all to the good. There is another school of thought in England, for example, which says. It is all very well, but the business of libraries is books. You can extend it if you want to film strips. You can extend it if you like to microfilms, but it is the written word and you should not do anything to divert the proper interests of the library from being actually

book-centred, defining the books in the larger sense of the term. Even so, as far as children's libraries are concerned, you can easily make it into an entertainment centre, but are you imparting any guts to the children's library? Are you making it a formative institution? Are you seeing to it that the programme of the children's library with its interest in books and other materials of communication shapes the child in a very definite manner? That is another discussion.

**SHRI ARUNODOY GUHA** The children's library movement, or for that matter, any movement with regard to children in this country, has been receiving attention only in very recent times. All previous efforts were individual attempts, and the small libraries in villages were established with the help of suggestions in the children's pages of newspapers. We are here to discuss how the children's library should be organized and how to achieve our goal of successful library service for children.

Previously our knowledge of children's libraries was limited to that available in books of foreign origin and we had also seen the working of a children's section of a foreign library in the city. But with the opening of the children's library of the National Library, it is hoped that we will have an idea of good children's library planning.

First I would like to discuss the age group. Opinions differ on the age range of a child. Some have it from 6 to 16, others from 6 to 18, some limit it from 6 to 12. So, before we plan any children's library activity, we have to fix the age of the child more specifically.

Secondly, how to plan the children's library? I would like to stress that we should never start these with haphazard planning. We should have some regulation and a systematic approach, leading to unhindered operation of the scheme.

**SHRI B. S. KESAVAN** What kind of system and regulation do you mean?

**SHRI ARUNODOY GUHA** My friend described a school in Bihar. That shows that if we encourage the students, those with funds and materials can utilize the energy and resources of the children and mould it the way they want. So persons like Shri Kesavan and others should influence the corporation.

and the government to start and run children's libraries on a systematic basis and plan on a national scale.

**SHRI BIMALENDU MAJUMDAR:** I do not have any experience in children's libraries, but since I am going to start one soon, I have been thinking over this matter for a long time. We have discussed for and against the use of toys in children's libraries. I think that toys should not be brought into children's library to be given to the children to play with. But it might be advisable to use them as an aid to the display of books. Supposing you have a new book about the sea, would it not be better if you have in your show case certain things that grow in the sea, say oysters, or sea-weeds so that you can draw the attention of the children to these and having secured their interest and attention draw them gently to the books on the subject for more information? Parents who bring their children personally can also be requested to take them to the display cases first and then to the books.

Another point I want to discuss at this meeting is classification. We will for the time being forget about Dewey and all the other systems of classification. I think the classification in each children's library should be according to the particular region and the type of juvenile literature available. We can make broad classifications, for example, Art and architecture will come under "A", crafts under "C", etc. With such broad classifications the children handling the books themselves can put them back in order if they are taught to do so. I would welcome any suggestion you might have on this question.

Another point is cataloguing. Shri Kesavan said that he did not yet have any arrangements for cataloguing—

**SHRI B. S. KESAVAN:** Everyone of the books in the children's library is catalogued and the catalogue cards are in the parent library in the accession department with all the bibliographic details collation, imprint hanging indentation, unhung indentation, every single thing as far as the cards are concerned. The only thing that I have not done is, I have not put the cards into a card cabinet and put them in the children's library at the moment because I have got a different approach to this. I am fully aware of the professional pleading on this matter that it is very necessary that at a tender age the child should

learn to finger 5" x 3" cards and to see what the card cabinet is and by means of all that attention step into the bigger library as to the manner born. But I feel that there are certain priorities to be observed in this matter. After having properly processed these books and having a good record of these books in the library, I have merely kept the books without distributing them with labels, without stamping them with rubber stamps, without in any way making them look institutional, I just kept them as books so that the children, when they handle the books, will handle something which is a work of art and beauty, not vitiated by the bad blue-ink rubber stamp of the librarian and his embossings. That is about the only thing that I have done, but there will come a time when dealing with a different age group I will have to eat these words of mine and go in for a card catalogue and also have a broad classification, though I would shrink in horror from the system suggested by Bimal just now, I would invent something different, but there will be a sort of broad classification and there will be a catalogue and all the paraphernalia that would delight the librarian's heart.

**SHRI BIMALENDU MAJUMDAR** The point I was trying to make was that there should be a very simple type of cataloguing for a children's library. Only an author card and a title card are needed. These will be needed because the libraries may have special hours for different schools to bring their students to the library, and a teacher might be interested to know if a certain book is available. This question can be answered from the simplified catalogue that I have mentioned. What is needed is the name of the author and a few other details not the collation, as in children's books, the illustrations and other things are automatic. And the subject card can be eliminated as the classification itself will do that part of the job.

**SHRI B. B. MOHANTY** The children's library movement is quite new in Orissa. But I am happy to state that this movement has not been initiated by the Government of Orissa, but by a private organization called the Prajatantra Prachar Samity, of which the founder is our present Chief Minister, Dr. Hare Krishna Mahatab. This organization publishes a daily called Prajatantra, which contains a weekly feature called Meena Bazar. There is also an institution called Meena Bazar which

is functioning under the Prajatantra Prachar Samity. Meena Bazar is a children's organization at the state level, purely voluntary and non-official and it affiliates village level organizations called Meena Mandalies. These organizations were started about ten to twelve years ago.

There are now about one thousand Meena Mandalies and members are children from 6 to 18. The only condition is that a member studying in the final year high school or in the pre-university class cannot become a Nayaka or leader. The membership fees is two annas for a year and eight annas for life. Members are free to elect their representatives, or the ministry as you may call it, the Chief Minister is called the Nayaka and all other representatives are called the Sectional or Portfolio Ministers. One will be in charge of cultural affairs and another of sports, health and so on.

This organization is a beehive of cultural activity at the village level and once every year or two years the central Meena Bazar organization organizes a Kendra Meena Mela at the state level.

In two or three years to come, the situation will be different. We now have at the state level a State Children's Welfare Association, at the district level the District Children's Welfare Association, and on behalf of the community project administration, we have the movement of Sisu Rajya, which is a sort of children's league. So now, at the state and district levels we have to pool the resources of all these organizations.

One good development now is that the State Children's Literature Committee functioning under the directorate of education is compiling a list of books suitable for children and also giving subsidy to the writers of children's books and helping them publish such books. However, it is a matter of regret that we in Orissa have failed to endeavor to inculcate a love of books in the minds of children. I have noticed a very commendable custom in West Bengal of parents presenting books to their children on their birthdays. One result of this lack of encouragement in Orissa to children becoming book conscious is that publishers take the upper hand and good juvenile literature, as is available in West Bengal, is not to be had in Orissa.

The Meena Mandalies are functioning in a humble way

now, but in the course of time, I am sure the number of Meena Mandalies will increase, strengthening the Meena Bazar institutions and the State Children's Welfare Associations, and when available resources are pooled we shall have an admirable movement of libraries for children.

**SHRI BIDHAN GOBINDA ADHIKARY.** Sri Ghosh, who is an expert in his field, has raised a problem in the course of his lecture. He talked of the shortage of juvenile literature in our country in all the regional languages and particularly in Bengali. This factor, should be cleared up. I know that literature for children cannot be manufactured. Perhaps Mau-machi can give us some pointers on how to obtain a multitude of literature to satisfy the varied interests of children.

A writers' workshop was organized four years ago in Bani-pore by the Government of West Bengal where I was also a candidate. But this effort was unsuccessful in producing any good writers. The impression at the end was that it only succeeded in manufacturing a few columnists, not of a high standard.

**SHRI B. S. KESAVAN.** May I protest against the word "juvenile"? Usually the word is connected with crime, punishment, imprisonment, or rather unfortunate behavior. Shall we banish this word when we refer to children and make our references to children's libraries, children's literature, children's reading rooms, etc., so the word "juvenile" can be doomed to perdition as it were?

**SHRI BIDHAN ADHIKARY.** Till we find creative writers, not by manufacturing them but by accident as they come, we can have more translations of foreign literature. Of course, a good translator has to be gifted too. They also cannot be manufactured as the Government of West Bengal tried four years ago and failed.

Children do not exclusively care for books of words. Books of pictures may be more interesting to them. Therefore, to have harmony between words and pictures, artists and painters may be encouraged to come forward and help. Here, the Library Association may have to do the needful.

**SHRI BIMBI GHOSH.** I have been asked to comment upon the means of propagating the cause of mature children's literature in this country. All our great authors from Tagore



onwards have admitted the fact that writing for children is a very difficult task. I feel that the Writers' Workshop is only one more way to spend money and to provide employment for a few persons for a few months. It is really unfortunate that every project that is started here has some political or other motive behind it. Some of my writer friends who had participated in this writers' project have expressed their sentiments against it.

I have noticed a tendency among would-be writers of children's literature to write poetry exclusively. This is very disappointing. Out of the contributions that I receive for my paper, 95% comprise poetry. If these authors show the same enthusiasm in better subjects our children's literature will be much more improved.

At the present moment, Bengali children's literature is comparable to world standards from the point of view of literary content, illustrations, etc. However, it is less expensive than children's books of America, for example.

Abanindranath, Dakshinaranjan and Nishikanta Sen, who are among the persons who taught me how to write children's literature, always advised me not to publish my stories immediately after they were written. I always write and re-write my stories until I get a satisfactory response from the children. I read them to Abanindranath used to say that if we write to order with an eye on the amount of money we are going to make out of it, that oneness with the child mind which is so essential is lost.

Before we attempt to write for children, the works of outstanding children's writers should be gone through again and again. Children have a peculiar vocabulary and phraseology of their own, and this should be studied and employed for the books to be appreciated by the child.

The age of fiction in children's literature is over. We should try to present science, economics and such other subjects in a form easily understood by children. I would request those persons connected with libraries and with a love of writing for children to do their writing keeping in mind the atmosphere of their children's libraries, and not with the manufacturing attitude of the workshop. They should refrain from writing the usual routine stories and poetry because such

poetry makes our children idle, inefficient and too sentimental. The need of the hour is for literature which would make our children hardworking, self-reliant, jolly and courageous. Young men who study scientific subjects should cultivate the habit of explaining these to their young brothers and sisters, so that if and when they wish to write for children in these fields it will not be dry and uninteresting expression of their own scientific thoughts. This leads to fulfilment in children's literature.

The government should make cheap editions of best children's book available or should subsidize the production of such publications so that they will be within the reach of everyone.

**SHRI BIJAYANATH MUKHURJEE** I believe I am correct in saying that the ideal of the West Bengal Government in starting the writers' workshop at Banipore was not to produce books for children but to produce books for neo-literates. And these books have been doing excellent service, as has been demonstrated at the University Institute where training for adult education is given. We must not confuse ourselves between work for neo-literates and the work of the children's librarian.

**SHRI S. N. SINHA** (Librarian Hindi High School Calcutta)

I have been librarian of the Hindi High School for the last nine years and prior to that I was a teacher for three years. The seven thousand books we have include reference books, children's books and books for general reading. There are one thousand children's books in English, Bengali and Hindi. The classification is not according to Dewey, but according to a book by Probhat Kumar Mukhopadhyay.

My school has students from 7 to 17 years of age. The most popular books among the children are detective stories, games and 'how to do it' books. Students also read books on arts and crafts and utilize this knowledge in a practical way.

I have received several books in English about how to do things, animals and science subjects but I have not been able to obtain such books in Hindi or Bengali.

**SHRI BIMBI GHOSH** I have come here today with a specific purpose. I suggest that a catalogue be prepared of selected children's books in our country from Trailokya

Mukherjee onwards, classified into age groups. If the Bengal Library Association could prepare such a catalogue, with a little information about the author, with the name of the book, when it was first published, with a small annotation, and even a reproduction of the best picture from the illustrations in the book to make it more interesting, they will not be losers.

SHRI SOUREN GANGULY (Bengal Library Association)

We publish a comprehensive bibliography occasionally on a particular subject. This bibliography contains information about the number of pages, illustrations, etc. The next issue of *granthagar* will be a special one on children's libraries in connection with the opening of the children's library at the National Library. This issue will also contain a list of selected children's books.

DR. NITAIK RANJAN ROY. In a day and a half we have covered rural libraries, mobile services, school libraries and also children's libraries. These are very important topics indeed.

So far as the libraries' point of view is concerned, I am sure this has been thoroughly discussed. But so far as children's literature is concerned, I do not know if it has received due attention. I wish at least a few of the leading writers of children's books were present here. Shri Kesavan emphasized very rightly that children's literature is not just an enlargement of the literature for adults. I know and everybody knows that the most difficult thing to write is for children. I had often been asked to transmute some of my writings for juvenile readers. Let me confess to you that I tried and failed. It is not an easy task. That it is not so easy may be realized from the fact that the best writer of children's literature is also the best writer of Bengali literature of all times till now. His name is Rabindranath Tagore. And some of the leading Bengali writers of today are writers for adults as much as for children. I might mention one who has been very successful as a writer for adults as also for the young. Premendra Mitra. Of all our writers, he is one who has succeeded in both. So far as children's literature in other Indian languages is concerned, I am afraid they are poorer even than Bengali.

In any case, this is the desideratum to which the Bengal

Library Association and all State Library Associations might turn a little more attention. The BLA might have a symposium as Shri Kesavan suggested, of librarians of children's libraries and writers of children's literature. If they could get together and discuss the problem, not by way of speeches as we have been doing, but by submitting papers and then holding a discussion on the precise points raised by the papers, then it would be a very good thing indeed.

I am very thankful to you all for having asked me to chair this symposium, I feel flattered. Shri Kesavan very often castigates me as a renegade because I gave up the profession in favour of teaching. I confess I have been a renegade in his sense, but I may have left the libraries and librarianship, but they have not left me. Being a teacher by profession, I have a library of my own and I have to take care of that library. You will be pleased to know that I have a personal collection of eight thousand volumes. And some of these volumes are very rare indeed. Anyway, I had to take care of that library and somehow or other I have been placed in charge of the department of libraries of the University of Calcutta. In any case, my connection with libraries and librarianship has not ceased and I do not want it to cease.

I have been very thankful indeed for your asking me to this honour and I extend to you all my heartiest thanks for the contribution which each one of you has made. I am most thankful to the USIS for taking the initiative in arranging this symposium.

The Bengal Library Association is one of our own institutions. I have been connected with this organization for the last 25 or 30 years. And if I extend my thanks to the BLA, it will be extending thanks to an organization to which I belong. Therefore I will not say another word.

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## **The Bengal Library Association**

*The Association* The Bengal Library Association is an organisation of individuals, institutions, societies and other corporate bodies, interested in the —

- (i) spread of education and culture among the people ,
- (ii) cultural and educational development of the people ,
- (iii) promotion of Library services for the spread of education and research ,
- (iv) promotion and development of organised library services in the State

The Association was established in the year 1925 with Poet Rabindranath Tagore as its first President

*Activities* The Association, since its inception, has been doing its best to popularise and promote the library movement in this State by —

- (i) organisation of the State Library Conference and observing the Library Day (20th December) every year and arranging other talks lectures symposia, group discussions, seminars and exhibitions on different aspects of the library movement and the science relating thereto ,
- (ii) working for the enactment of a legislation leading to the extension of free library facilities to each and every member of the State and better utilisation and administration of the library system and also for the establishment of the municipal library system in the city and urban areas of the State
- (iii) conducting the certificate course of training in Librarianship, the Camp training classes for the rural librarians and helping other institutions and organisations in conducting their training classes in librarianship in order to disseminate the knowledge of science

fic method of maintenance and organisation of libraries ,

- (iv) maintaining an well equipped library of publications and materials pertaining to the library movement and the science ,
- (v) publishing the library journal "GRANTHAGAR" (in Bengali) and other books, pamphlets, charts, posters and statistics, thought to be desirable for the promotion of the cause ,
- (vi) encouraging bibliographical study and publishing bibliographical information ,
- (vii) working for the improvement of pay and status of the library personnel ,
- (viii) working for the co-ordination of the libraries and systematisation of their methods ,
- (ix) rendering both technical and non technical services to any individual or organisation and serving as an information bureau in respect of library matters ,
- (x) supporting the establishment of other organisations with similar objects as those of the Associations ,

At Present Now, the total number of different classes of members (Donor—Life—Institutional—Ordinary—and Honorary) of the Association is 1600 The Association office remains open regularly between 4 p.m. and 9 p.m. on all working days. The State Government the Central Government and the Corporation of Calcutta have been supporting and encouraging the activities of the Association through financial help. So far as the professional employment is concerned, in practice, the Certificate Course of Training in Librarianship conducted by the Association has gained its due recognition from the public bodies and the private organisations as well. In respect of library matters both technical and non-technical, the suggestions and opinion of the Association are highly solicited.

*The Membership of the Association* The Association consists of five classes of members. Details of admission to any of these are furnished in the following table .

Class	Candidature	Subscription
1 Donors	Any citizen	Rs 150 00 at a time
2 Lifemembers	"	Rs 75 00 at a time
3 Ordinary members	"	Rs 3 00 per annum
4 Honorary members	A distinguished person	—
5 Institutional members	Any Library, Institution and societies	Rs 4 00 per annum

The year of the Association means the calendar year (1st January to 31st December) In all cases the annual subscription is to be paid in advance and is regarded as due on the 1st January of the year for which it is due A member is eligible to enjoy all the privileges and rights of the Association, provided his subscription is not in arrears for a period exceeding three months

*Powers & Privileges* Any member of the Association is entitled to of the following privileges

- 1 To seek any sort of assistance, guidance or advice in respect of library matters
- 2 To receive free copies of the "GRANTHAGAR" throughout the year
- 3 To participate in all the activities of the Association
- 4 To enjoy reasonable discount in purchasing publications of the Association
- 5 To vote or to stand for election provided the membership is 12 months old and the subscription is not in arrears for a period exceeding three months

## PUBLICATIONS

### BOOKS IN PRINT

- |  |   |
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| <p>1 ADITYAKUMAR OHDEGAR -<br/>Granthabidya, dwitiya<br/>Khanda 1367 B S (In<br/>Bengali) Rs 1 00</p> <p>2 BANGIYA GRANTHAGAR PARI-<br/>SHAD Nirbachita Bang-<br/>la granther talika 1369<br/>B S (Classified and in-<br/>dexed bibliography of<br/>3000 selected Bengali<br/>books and periodicals<br/>covering all fields of<br/>knowledge An essential<br/>check list and book selec-<br/>tion tool for all public<br/>libraries In Bengali)<br/>Rs 5 00</p> <p>3 BIJAYNATH MUKHOPADHYAY 11<br/>Granthagar o lok-<br/>shiksha 1365 B S (In<br/>Bengali) Rs 2 50</p> <p>4 BIMAI KUMAR DATTA<br/>Rabindrasahitye grantha-<br/>gar 1369 B S (In Ben-<br/>gali) Rs 2 00</p> <p>6 PRAMI CHANDRA BASU<br/>Granthakar nama (In<br/>Bengali) Rs 2 00</p> <p>6 RANANATHAN, S R -<br/>Library personality and</p> | <p>library bill : West Ben-<br/>gal 1957 (In English)<br/>Rs 2 00</p> <p>7 BENGA L LIBRARY ASSO-<br/>CIATION . Library service<br/>in India to-day 1963<br/>(In English) Rs 3 00</p> <p>BOOKS IN PRESS</p> <p>8 West Bengal Library Direc-<br/>tory (In English)</p> <p>9 ADITYA KUMAR OHDEGAR<br/>Granthabidya, dwitiya<br/>sanskaran (Two parts in<br/>one volume In Bengali)</p> <p>10 BANI BASU Bibliography<br/>of Children Literature in<br/>Bengali Language</p> <p>JOURNAL</p> <p>11 GRANTHAGAR Bangiya<br/>Granthagar Parishader mu-<br/>khopatra (Organ of the<br/>Bengal Library Association<br/>Bengal Library Associa-<br/>tion Covers specially<br/>the news, views, science<br/>and technique relating to<br/>the library movement in<br/>West Bengal ) Annual sub-<br/>scription Rs 5 00 for non-<br/>members Free to mem-<br/>bers</p> |
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